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- **9 a.m.** Canada and the U.S. clash for women's hockey gold for the fourth time. Canada has won the last three gold medals.
- **9:30 a.m.** Rosalind Groenewoud will go for the inaugural gold in women's ski halfpipe. GREG DOWNS/FOR METRO

When your beloved beast leaves you a bit deceased

The story behind owning a lethal animal

PAGES 12 & 13

SLEIGHING FOR KEEPS

Canada's Kaillie Humphries, left, and Heather Moyse celebrate their gold-medal win in women's bobsled at the Sochi Winter Olympics in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, on Wednesday. For more Olympic coverage, including the Canadian men's hockey team's narrow win over Latvia, see pages 32 & 33.

JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Decision on coal facility delayed again

Surrey. Questions linger over possible effects on health

Uncertainty surrounding the potential effects on human health prompted Port Metro Vancouver to once more delay a decision on a controversial coal-transfer facility in Surrey.

The port has asked Fraser Surrey Docks, which applied about a year and a half ago for a permit to handle four million metric tonnes of coal shipped from the U.S., to provide it with more information on health consequences before it ultimately makes a decision, port officials said Wednesday.

The decision comes after scathing public comments on the environment impact assessment Fraser Surrey Docks conducted on its project.

Of the 3,000 comments on the assessment the port received in a one-month period, the overwhelming majority were negative and called for further study or the axing of the project altogether.

This is the second time the port has sent FSD back to do more homework in the face of public outcry. In September, the port asked for the environmental impact assessment that critics subsequently deemed inadequate.

The decision came as somewhat of a surprise to project opponents, as port CEO Robin Silvester had said in December there was no need to conduct a separate health assessment.

Kevin Washbrook, who has rallied the charge against the project for the group Voters Taking Action on Climate Change, is pleased with the delay but still has questions.

"It's a good sign that the port is actually listening to community concerns and the experts," Washbrook said. "Of course, that doesn't remove our concern abut the climate impacts of thermal coal."

Washbrook wants potential health impacts to be studied from the moment the coal crosses the border to the time it gets to Texada Island, where it will be held before shipment overseas.

Once the port receives the additional health information from FSD, it will make a final decision. There is no timeline for this, but the port says its decision will take into account input from the public, municipalities, provincial agencies and First Nations.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Downtown Eastside

PHS phone drive deemed a huge success

PHS Community Services Society says its recent drive to get potentially life-saving cellphones into the hands of seniors has been a huge success.

Since the program was launched in December, more than 1,700 new and used cellphones and chargers have been donated to PHS.

The SIM-less phones will be given to seniors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside who currently don't have a means of accessing emergency service should they need to call 911.

The program's initial goal was to collect 500 phones. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Coquitlam

Vancouver man suing 7-Eleven after falling into manhole

A Vancouver man is suing 7-Eleven and the City of Coquitlam after he fell into a manhole outside one of the chain's convenience stores.

Albert Trim alleges he was leaving the 7-Eleven at 1031 Burnette Ave. on Oct. 17, 2013, when he stepped on an unsecured cover and fell into a manhole, according to documents filed in B.C. Supreme Court. Trim says he injured both his knees, legs and his right hand in the fall.

Both the city and 7-Eleven declined to comment because the matter is before the courts. The city and 7-Eleven have 21 days to respond.

ELIZABETH HAMES/FOR METRO

Feds doubling aerial surveillance funds

A National Aerial Surveillance Program flight flies over ships anchored on English Bay in Vancouver on Wednesday. The federal government announced it is doubling the money spent on aerial surveillance to monitor pollution such as oil spills from ships in Canadian waters.

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Clark 'hopeful' about pace of LNG plans

Liquefied natural gas. Some — including the finance minister — doubt premier's goal for B.C. to start collecting revenues by 2017

Premier Christy Clark insisted Wednesday it's still possible her much-hyped vision for liquefied natural gas could start bringing in cash in three years' time, a day after her own finance minister appeared to temper those expectations.

Clark won last year's provincial election in large part on a promise to foster a trillion-dollar LNG industry that she said could create more than 100,000 jobs and wipe out B.C.'s debt. The province would start collecting LNG revenues, Clark told voters, by 2017.

But there have been doubts about whether that goal is realistic, and even B.C. Finance Minister Mike de Jong said this week that he doesn't expect LNG revenues for at least three to five years.

Clark said she remains optimistic. "I'm still hopeful that we can get there," the premier said.

"It depends on when the private-sector companies, the proponents, get to their final investment decision."

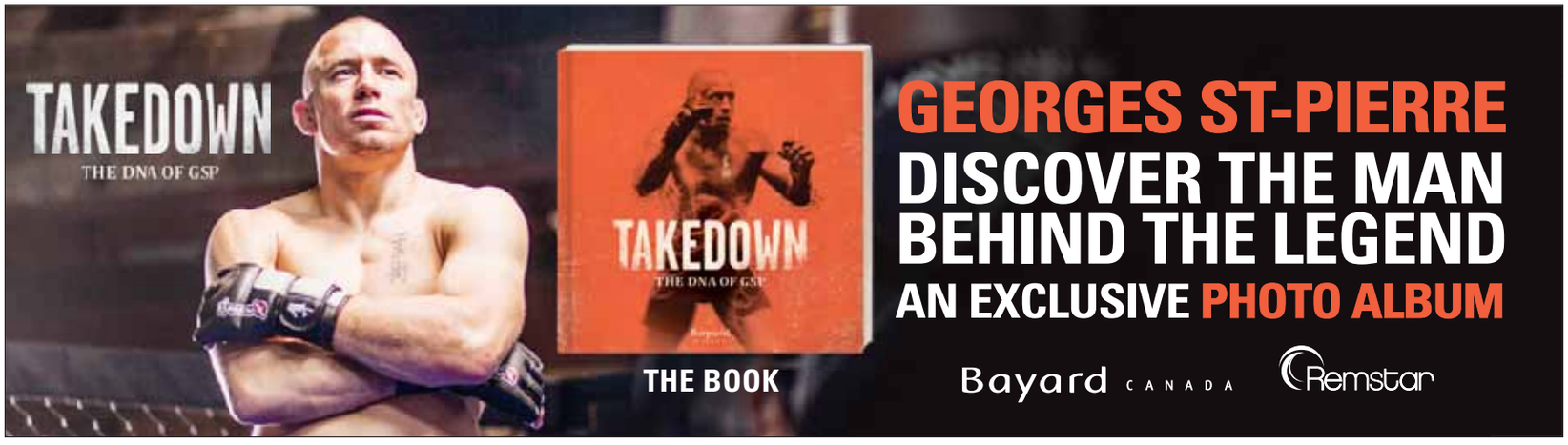
Some details about how the province will tax and regulate the industry, originally expected last year, were released in Tuesday's provincial budget, though they have yet to be finalized.

Clark has said there are 10 potential projects under consideration but none of the prospective operators has made a final decision. Even so, Clark brushed aside the suggestion her LNG plans are lagging behind. She said some proponents could make their final decisions by 2016.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Once-in-a-generation

Clark has staked her political legacy on the success of the LNG industry, which she has cast as a once-in-a-generation opportunity on the same level as the moon landing. She even included a nod to U.S. president John F. Kennedy, who launched America headlong into the 1960s space race, in her government's most recent throne speech.



Hot dog! Food truckers give their blessing to new bylaws

Street eats. Rules forbid rental and hoarding of permits, give restaurants a 100-metre safe zone

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

There have been growing pains as the city spearheaded a plan to evolve its street eats from hot dogs, chestnuts and ice cream to curries, gourmet grilled cheese and tacos.

City council approved a new street-vending bylaw on Wednesday in an effort to address challenges that occurred when food carts and restaurants found themselves co-existing with food trucks, a 2010 addition that garnered Vancouver a reputation as a thriving street-food scene.

The new rules will prohibit the rental of permits — business owners must have a roaming or stationary permit to operate — in order to encourage entrepreneurs and stop the exorbitant rental costs. It will also put a cap on how many permits one company can own.

Street vendors must also set up 100 metres away from brick-and-mortar establishments that sell the "same category" of products, a change that some food-truck operators felt wasn't specific enough.

Jason Apple of Gourmet Syndicate, which operates the Roaming Dragon and Vij's Railway Express food trucks, told council he has been yelled at by a Greek restaurant owner on 4th Avenue for breaking the rule.

His purported bylaw foul? Selling butter chicken schnitzel too close to the restaurant that also sells chicken.

Apple supports the changes and also suggested the inter-municipal business licence be available for food trucks so they can provide catering at events in Burnaby or Richmond.

Andrew Fielding, president of the Street Food Vancouver Society, supported the bylaw changes but pointed out how tough the business is for food trucks, as council will set fees later this year.

"None of us are getting rich doing this," he said, adding 17 trucks have started and failed this year. About 60 per cent of his business comes from the street, with the remainder coming from catering opportunities.

One hot-dog vendor was less fond of the bylaw changes. Mike Ramanauskas accused the city of micromanaging by prohibiting the rental of permits, which the taxi industry does freely. Banks even finance taxi permits, which can sell for thousands of dollars.

As part of the bylaw changes, the city will also look into a program for art carts that would sell locally made, artisanal goods.

Need the help

"None of us are getting rich doing this."

Andrew Fielding, president of the Street Food Vancouver Society

Jason Apple, left, and Jory Simkin, co-owners of food truck Roaming Dragon, at Kits Beach in 2010. JEFF HODSON/METRO FILE

Moonlight desires

Patios to stay open later this summer

The city has granted Vancouverites permission to stay on patios just a little bit longer on summer nights.

A pilot program letting patios stay open until midnight instead of 11 p.m. will be extended to the 2014 summer season as part of the street-vending bylaw approved Wednesday.

It all stemmed from a motion by Mayor Gregor Robertson to shed the city's no-fun image — or, as Robertson puts it, make the city "even more fun."

So far, 51 restaurants have been approved to participate and only two applications were denied, city engineer Karyn Magnusson told council.

Patios can only participate in the pilot, which extends from April to October, if they haven't had any complaints for a year.

The city started the pilot on Labour Day weekend last fall, but rain and shorter days prevented it from collecting enough data to approve the changes permanently. However, not a single complaint was received by the city regarding the extended patio hours.

Health authority concerned about 30 Hour Famine

World Vision is defending its 30 Hour Famine after Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) levelled concerns over the school-run charity event.

The health authority released a statement Wednesday, expressing its concern that fasting could trigger eating disorders or depression in impressionable teenagers who are sensitive about their weight and body image.

"There are more positive alternatives for raising awareness of global hunger and food insecurity than just going without food," said VCH dietitian Helen Yeung. "The potential harm is something physicians are worried about."

Yeung suggested healthier ways to show solidarity with the poor and hungry: going technology-free for 30 hours, trying commonly eaten sparse meals — such as beans, rice and onions — or volunteering with organizations that prepare meals for the less fortunate.

She could not point to any specific examples of the 30 Hour Famine leading to an eating disorder.

World Vision spokesperson Darryl Konynenbelt said the famines they organize for schools are upbeat, positive events that are closely supervised by parents and teachers.

"We do offer kids a chance to do other fasts than just food," Konynenbelt said. "The whole goal is to raise awareness by fasting something, like social media."

Any student participating in the event must have their parents sign off, so if they're aware a child has an eating disorder or insecurity they would be encouraged to give something else up.

"It's a very controlled environment, and parents have full discretion," said Konynenbelt.

While organizers have to be aware of the risk, Yeung insists VCH aren't the fun police when it comes to the event, which lets teens spend a weekend together with friends under school supervision.

"We want students to be engaged about global hunger," she said. "We're not trying to tell schools what to do, just give them information to help make informed choices."

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Fundraising

The 30 Hour Famine began in 1971, and World Vision says some 650,000 students have raised more than $75 million in Canada for the charity since its inception.

- Last year, the event raised $1.3 million in Canada.

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Coroner report. Man too intoxicated to save self

A Vancouver man died because he was too intoxicated to save himself from a fire that engulfed his camper van last May, an investigation by the B.C. coroner has revealed.

Morgan McDonald, 27, was fast asleep when the fire started around 4 a.m. on May 25, 2013, on Victoria Drive at 12th Avenue, according to a coroner's report released this week.

The coroner concluded the source of the fire was either a tea-light candle or barbecue lighter, which ignited the carpet. A spilled bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey added fuel to the fire. McDonald didn't wake up, even as the flames spread to the couch.

He was too "impaired by use of alcohol and cocaine" to become aware of the fire, and succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning, the report reads.

The fire burned for up to an hour before anyone noticed. The sound of the van's windows breaking from the heat alerted neighbours.

ELIZABETH HAMES/FOR METRO

One-stop shop. Mayors' TransLink website not political, Moore says

The new TransLink mayors' council website sports just the facts and no attacks, according to Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore.

On Tuesday, Moore launched translinkmayors.ca, outlining the council's voting history on transit expansion, preferred funding sources and its opposition to the upcoming provincially imposed referendum in one convenient spot.

"We decided we need to get our positions out clearly," said Moore. "It's about setting the record straight. When people ask if we've voted a certain way, we actually have, but it wasn't online anywhere unless you came across a news story."

The website outlines the mayors' council efforts in 2012 to reform TransLink's governance, its 2010 call for infrastructure improvements, its 2013 endorsement of vehicle levies and road pricing as a solution to finding new funding and its stance against the referendum.

While the site can be seen as a sharp response to Transportation Minister Todd Stone, who has accused the mayors of being at an impasse and not sharing a unified vision, Moore said it wasn't politically motivated.

"It's more to clarify our position in a one-stop shop."

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

HIV/AIDS

Panama adopts B.C. strategy

B.C.'s Treatment as Prevention strategy has been adopted by another country. Panama was expected to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Thursday to adopt the acclaimed strategy as its official policy.

Treatment as Prevention involved widespread HIV testing and immediate access to antiretroviral therapy to patients. Rapid testing and treatment has improved patient health, reduced the transmission of the virus and saved lives.

The strategy has yet to be acknowledged by the federal government. China, France and Brazil have all adopted the strategy, along with U.S. cities like San Francisco and New York.

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

West Vancouver

Union responds to allegations

The union representing West Vancouver police says allegations of sexual and racial harassment made by former officers are "not representative of current conditions."

The West Vancouver Police Association says the allegations are concerning, but it is confident the police board will take appropriate steps "to ensure no employee at the WVPD is subjected to inappropriate behaviour in the work environment."

Tom Wolff von Gudenburg, union president, issued the statement Wednesday, two days after the release of an employee satisfaction survey that alleged a culture of bullying, racism and sexual harassment within the force.

ELIZABETH HAMES/FOR METRO

Vancouver is the most livable city in North America, and fifth in the world, according to the 2014 Quality of Living Survey put out by global consulting firm Mercer. The coastal city's mild climate pushed it ahead of its Canadian counterparts. DOUG PENSINGER/GETTY IMAGES

Vancouver 'most livable' in N. America

Well ... yeah. Quality of Living survey takes into account education, recreation, precipitation

ELIZABETH HAMES
vancouver@metronews.ca

Vancouver has once again been named one of the world's most-livable cities — and it has its mild weather to thank.

The 2014 Quality of Living survey, released Wednesday, ranks Vancouver as the fifth most-livable city in the world, behind Vienna, Zurich, Auckland and Munich.

Surveyors evaluated the livability of 223 cities based on 39 factors, including their political environment, personal and media freedoms, healthcare, education, transportation, housing and recreation.

Canadian cities did well on the North American rankings, snagging the top four spots. But on a global scale, Vancouver is far ahead of Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal, which ranked 14th, 15th and 23rd, respectively.

"Vancouver tends to do well on a number of categories," said Luc Lalonde, principle with global consulting firm Mercer, which conducted the study.

But, it was the city's mild climate that pushed it far ahead of its Canadian counterparts, he added.

It's not the first time that Vancouver has ranked high on global livability listings.

Last August, The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) ranked Vancouver third behind Vienna and Melbourne, which claimed the top spot.

However, The EIU also ranked Vancouver the most expensive city in North America in a study released last February.

The Mercer survey considered the "economic environment" in its evaluation, but Lalonde said Mercer didn't look at affordability as a determining factor of livability.

Elderly couple nearly drive car into pool

Firefighters work to remove people from a car that lost control and crashed upside down near a pool at Arbutus Ridge townhouse complex. CONTRIBUTED

An elderly couple is in hospital after the driver lost control of his vehicle, flipped upside down and landed next to a swimming pool.

The couple was driving along Springtree Drive in the Arbutus Ridge townhouse complex around 1 p.m. when he drove through a fence, down a set of stairs and careened off a wall. The Volvo came to a stop on its hood, just a few inches from the complex pool.

Fire crews managed to pull the couple from the vehicle, and they were sent to hospital with minor injuries.

However, the situation could have been much worse if the Volvo had landed only a few inches to the left, said Brian Montague, spokesperson for the Vancouver Police Department.

"Any time a vehicle goes into a body of water, especially if it goes in upside down, it becomes very difficult for people to get out and the risk of drowning becomes very high," he said.

Hazmat crews were on scene Wednesday to clean up gasoline that spilled from the car, and emergency crews called in a crane to remove the vehicle. ELIZABETH HAMES/FOR METRO

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Sochi

IOC president praises Ukraine's athletes

IOC president Thomas Bach has expressed his condolences to victims of the violence in Ukraine and praised Ukraine's Olympic athletes for continuing to compete at the Sochi Games.

Ukraine sent a team of 43 athletes to Sochi.

Bach says "the way they have continued to represent their nation with great dignity is a credit to them and their country." He says "their presence here is a symbol that sport can build bridges."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dmytro Mytsak of Ukraine during the alpine skiing men's giant slalom in Sochi on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

Europe

EU debating sanctions against Ukraine

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters that he and his counterparts from Germany and Poland would meet both sides in Ukraine ahead of the EU meeting on possible sanctions. He said he hoped the two sides "will find a way for dialogue."

Possible sanctions include travel bans and asset freezes, which could hit hard the powerful oligarchs who back Viktor Yanukovych.

Ordinary Ukrainians, meanwhile, are struggling amid a stagnating economy and soaring corruption.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anti-government protesters protect themselves with shields during clashes with riot police in Independence Square, the epicentre of the country's current unrest, in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday, before the president and leaders of the protest called a truce. SERGEI CHUZAVKOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ukraine calls a truce

Negotiations. Earlier violence that killed 26 had fuelled fears the nation could be sliding toward a messy breakup

Ukraine's embattled president and leaders of the protests that have been roiling the country agreed Wednesday on a truce to halt the violence that has killed 26 people and injured more than 425 others.

A protest leader was quoted as saying the government pledged not to attack an opposition encampment in central Kyiv while further negotiations unfold.

President Viktor Yanukovych met with opposition leaders and the two sides agreed to halt the violence and to hold talks on ending bloodshed, a statement on the presidential website said. The statement did not give any further details.

Vitali Klitschko, one of the leaders of the protests that have sought to keep Ukraine open to Europe and out of a close political and economic alliance with Russia, was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying that Yanukovych agreed that there would be no attempt to storm the protesters' encampment on the main square of downtown Kyiv.

Flames from burning barricades of tires and refuse leapt into the air at the square for a second night, as protesters demanding Yanukovych's resignation showed no sign of yielding.

The truce announcement came hours after the president replaced the army chief and the military vowed a national anti-terrorist operation to restore order.

Officials have often referred to the protesters who have demanded Yanukovych's resignation for months as "terrorists."

Political and diplomatic manoeuvring has continued, with both Moscow and the West eager to gain influence over this former Soviet republic. Three EU foreign ministers — from Germany, France and Poland — were heading to Kyiv on Thursday to speak with both sides before an emergency EU meeting back in Brussels to consider sanctions against those responsible for the recent violence in Ukraine.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An issue of identity

The recent violence has been the worst in nearly three months of anti-government protests that have paralyzed Kyiv.

- The two sides are locked in a battle over the identity of this nation of 46 million, whose loyalties are divided between Russia and the West.

Russia. Cossacks attack Pussy Riot members with horsewhips over protest

Cossack militia attacked the Pussy Riot punk group with horsewhips on Wednesday as the artists — who have feuded with Vladmir Putin's government for years — tried to perform under a sign advertising the Sochi Olympics.

Six group members — five women and one man — donned their signature ski masks and were pulling out a guitar and microphone as at least 10 Cossacks and other security officials moved in. One Cossack appeared to use pepper spray. Another whipped several group members while other Cossacks ripped off their masks and threw the guitar in a garbage can.

Police arrived and questioned witnesses, but no one was arrested.

Pussy Riot, a performance-art collective involving a loose membership of feminists who edit their actions into music videos, has become an international flashpoint for those who contend Putin's government has exceeded its authority, particularly restricting human and gay rights.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Cossack militiaman attacks Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and a photographer as she and fellow members of the punk group Pussy Riot, including Maria Alekhina, right, in the pink balaclava, stage a protest performance in Sochi, Russia, on Wednesday. MORRY GASH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada reacts

Feds consider diplomatic options

During a bilateral meeting in Mexico, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President Barack Obama were in agreement on several fronts in regards to the Ukrainian crisis, calling it a "welcome step" if a truce was called between the Ukrainian government and opposition leaders.

"We hold the government responsible and urge them to take all the steps necessary to resolve the situation," Harper told a news conference following the meeting.

Harper and Obama also urged the Ukrainian military to show restraint and refrain from becoming involved in issues that should be resolved by civilians, the statement said.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said Canada is considering a range of diplomatic options to send a message to the Yanukovych government, including targeted sanctions.

The Harper government will consult other nations as it considers possible next steps, he said. "I will ... be consulting our allies and like-minded nations to build a co-ordinated path forward in the coming days."

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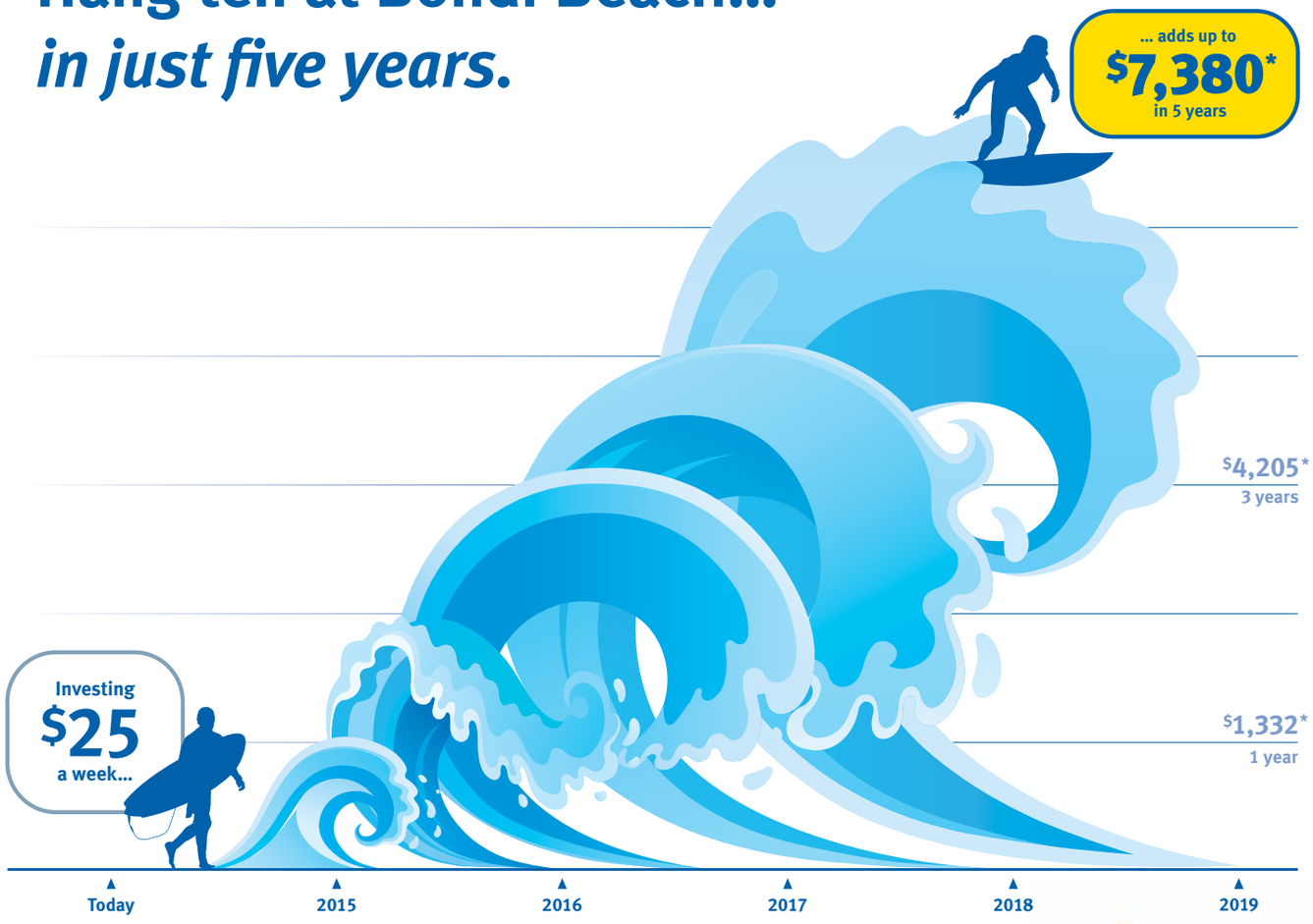

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Hide-and-seek. RCMP hopes pig carcass will lead to missing bodies

The Saskatchewan RCMP is hoping a bright-orange pig carcass will help them locate missing bodies in Saskatchewan's River System.

Equipped with a radio transmitter and GPS tracker, members of the RCMP's major crimes historical case unit (HCU) placed the 180-pound pig into the South Saskatchewan River at the Saskatoon Canoe Club on Wednesday morning.

"The whole idea of this project is to track this pig's movements as it flows down the river and hopefully, that will give us some insight as to where bodies end up," said Cpl. Tyler Hadland, of the HCU, noting six bodies are presumed to be in the South Saskatchewan River.

"The Saskatoon historical case unit has been annually searching the river, by plane and by boat, for the past number of years and we haven't been able to recover any of these bodies," he said. "So it's quite a mystery."

RCMP said Wednesday's launch is the projects' second phase, as a pig-carcass with similar tracking devices was placed into the North Saskatchewan River in North Battleford in the fall of 2013.

However, the carcass only travelled 20 kilometres before it was found on a sandbar a week later. **MORGAN MODJESKI/ METRO IN SASKATOON**

Cruise ship. Worker accused of rape, trying to throw victim off balcony

A cruise ship worker from Indonesia is accused of raping a passenger aboard a Holland America Line vessel and then trying to throw her overboard, authorities said Tuesday.

The FBI reports that 28-year-old Ketut Pujayasa was arrested Sunday when the MS Nieuw Amsterdam returned to Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale. The incident occurred early Friday morning in international waters off the coast of Roatan, Honduras.

According to a criminal complaint, the victim — a 31-year-old U.S. woman — told investigators she was attacked and raped in her stateroom. The attacker tried to throw her from the balcony, but she escaped and received help from another passenger.

Pujayasa initially left the room but then turned himself in. The report says the Indonesian man told investigators he attacked the victim because she had disrespected him earlier. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Suspended senator Patrick Brazeau has found work at the Barefax strip club near Parliament Hill in Ottawa, shown here on Wednesday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brazeau lands gig at strip joint

New job. Brazeau has been without a steady Senate paycheque since his suspension in November

Patrick Brazeau has gone from sitting in the Senate to helping run a strip club.

The suspended senator, who faces criminal charges in connection with the expense scandal that roiled the august upper chamber last year, is now working as a manager at an Ottawa strip joint.

Brazeau has been spotted inside the Barefax Gentlemen's Club in recent days, but he declined Wednesday to speak to reporters camped outside the establishment who trailed him inside to the door of his office.

Carmelina Bentivoglio, the daughter of the club's owner, said Brazeau interviewed for a job as a day manager two weeks ago. He'll be responsible for "scheduling, hiring, firing, inventory — just like any other job," she said. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Odd jobs

Patrick Brazeau also tried his hand as a columnist for the Halifax version of Frank magazine, but was canned after one-and-a-half columns, prompting an apology from the editor for subjecting readers to Brazeau's "narcissistic ramblings."

- Brazeau will oversee between 25 and 30 employees in his new job, which he started Monday.

Patrick Brazeau THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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Sandor Csepeli – Vancouver, BC

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Brad Atkins - Abbotsford, BC

Asa Allen – Mackenzie, BC

10

11

12

9 WINNERS, 3 MORE TO GO. YOU COULD BE NEXT.

At time of purchase, some of the prizes offered may have already been claimed.

Escaping the death grip

Snake on the loose.
An Alberta man is lucky to be alive after his Burmese python coiled around him

MARCO VIGLIOTTI
Metro in Regina

The Burmese python is one of the world's five largest snakes. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Say that one day your beloved pet, whom you had watched sprout since his infancy, managed to break free of his warm, well-ventilated enclosure and began to wriggle his frame around you.

If you had any time to think, you might reflect that although you've been a benevolent caretaker all this time, you're now gasping for air as the ungrateful pet squeezes you ever tighter. Heartbreaking stuff, right?

The pet in question isn't a Labradoodle, and this isn't a story from somewhere in Southeast Asia.

Rather, it's a true tale that involves one of the largest snakes on the planet — the feared Burmese python — and a basement in Alberta.

"(The owner) had this rather large dangerous snake he kept in his basement," explained Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, who did not specify the location of the home. "He went down there to check on it and because it was loose it started to coil around him."

Luckily, the man was able to escape — albeit with a newfound and well-deserved fear of the tropical snake. He quickly called conservation officers to help him handle the creature.

The Burmese python is one of the world's five biggest snakes, a collection that also includes the African rock python. The latter is the same species of snake that killed two boys in New Brunswick last summer after escaping from its cage.

Unlike that situation, in which it appears the owner didn't have a permit, the owner in Alberta was able to legally possess the snake thanks to a grandfathering clause in provincial regulations.

"It was during a time in which we were changing regulations and becoming more strict," Dunford explained. "(The owner) got a shelter permit because he possessed it legally before we made our regulations more restrictive, so we grandfathered the possession of certain pets for a time."

Quoted

"After a day they went in there and because the temperature was much cooler, the snake was so lethargic that it was not aggressive at all."

Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, describing how officials corralled a loose Burmese python.

Once officers arrived, they developed a game plan to safely apprehend the snake.

As the Burmese python thrives in blisteringly hot conditions, Dunford said, officers decided to turn off the heat in the house in hopes that cooler conditions would slow the snake down.

It worked. "After a day, they went in there and because the temperature was much cooler, the snake was so lethargic that it was not aggressive at all," he explained. "They were able actually to help the owner simply get it back into its secure container."

But this is Canada — could I really meet a pet crocodile on the loose?*

The deaths of two young boys in New Brunswick last summer at the hands of an escaped African rock python alerted the country to the potential dangers of unusual pets.

But is there really such a threat in famously frigid Canada of encountering somebody's dangerous exotic animal?

It appears to depend on where you live, but generally, it seems that Canada poses a far bigger threat to odd pets than they do to us.

"Fortunately (in Alberta) we haven't had too many issues with exotics getting into the wild," Pat Dunford, an Alberta conservation officer, told Metro, noting the province does have a detailed action plan to handle these sorts of situations.

He said dangerous animals imported from sunnier locales, such as tropical snakes, would probably only survive during the summer months and wouldn't "last long when the temperature gets colder."

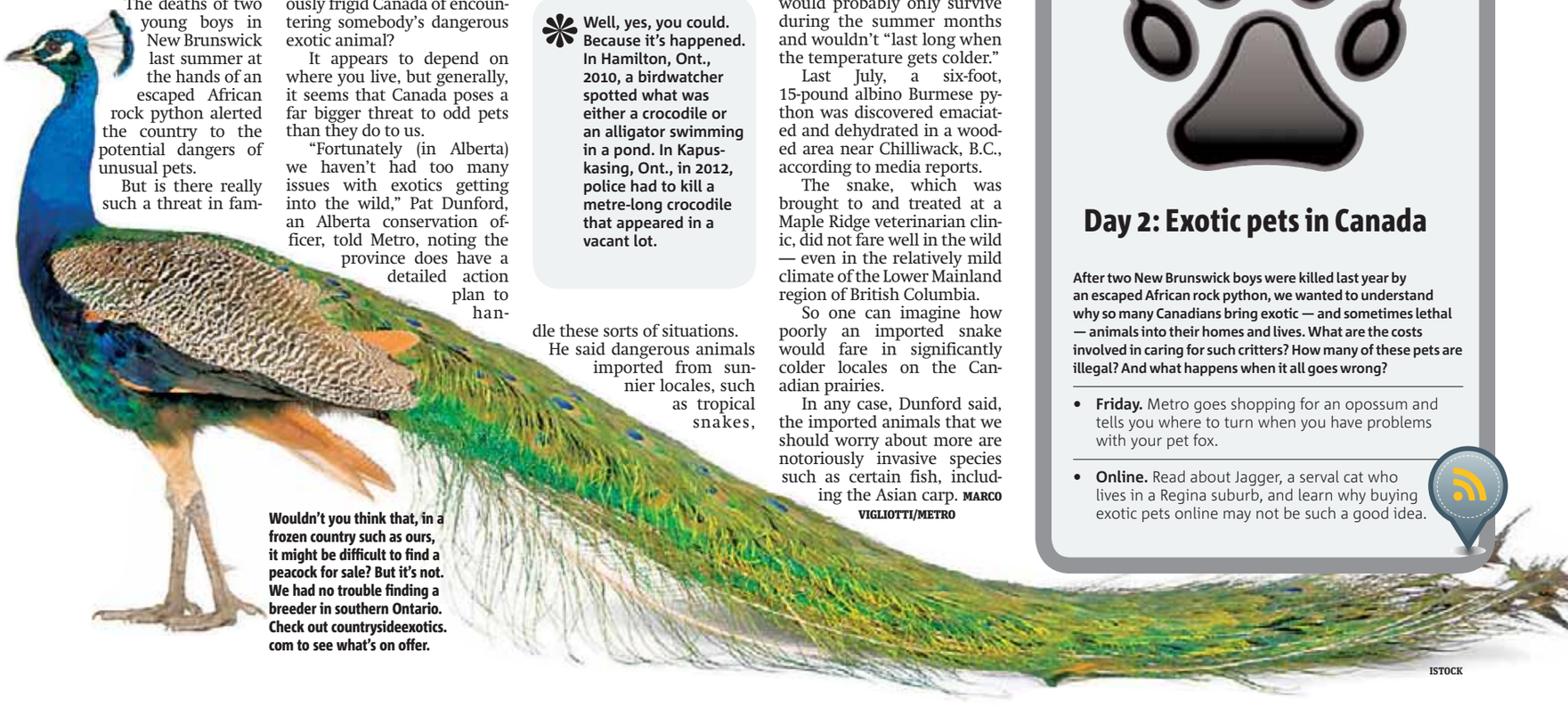
Last July, a six-foot, 15-pound albino Burmese python was discovered emaciated and dehydrated in a wooded area near Chilliwack, B.C., according to media reports.

The snake, which was brought to and treated at a Maple Ridge veterinarian clinic, did not fare well in the wild — even in the relatively mild climate of the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia.

So one can imagine how poorly an imported snake would fare in significantly colder locales on the Canadian prairies.

In any case, Dunford said, the imported animals that we should worry about more are notoriously invasive species such as certain fish, including the Asian carp. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

* **Well, yes, you could. Because it's happened. In Hamilton, Ont., 2010, a birdwatcher spotted what was either a crocodile or an alligator swimming in a pond. In Kapuskasing, Ont., in 2012, police had to kill a metre-long crocodile that appeared in a vacant lot.**


Wouldn't you think that, in a frozen country such as ours, it might be difficult to find a peacock for sale? But it's not. We had no trouble finding a breeder in southern Ontario. Check out countrysideexotics.com to see what's on offer.

ISTOCK

Day 2: Exotic pets in Canada

After two New Brunswick boys were killed last year by an escaped African rock python, we wanted to understand why so many Canadians bring exotic — and sometimes lethal — animals into their homes and lives. What are the costs involved in caring for such critters? How many of these pets are illegal? And what happens when it all goes wrong?

- **Friday.** Metro goes shopping for an opossum and tells you where to turn when you have problems with your pet fox.
- **Online.** Read about Jagger, a serval cat who lives in a Regina suburb, and learn why buying exotic pets online may not be such a good idea.

The hot-button hedgehog

Sure, they're cute, but in some parts of the U.S., they also seem to be controversial —partly, it appears, because of a debate over whether they spread foot-and-mouth disease. According to online forum hedgehogcentral.com, the animals are illegal in California, Hawaii, Georgia and the five boroughs of New York City. Maine has also had restrictions, and the site describes the situation in Pennsylvania as "all out war on hedgehogs within the state."

Hedgehog advocates insist the animals are not a problem. Z.G. Standing Bear, treasurer of the International Hedgehog Association, told Torstar News Service last year that six U.S. states and several cities ban hedgehogs for "all kinds of reasons" based on "no facts at all." "They're benign. There is nothing dangerous about them. That's what irritates us so much; they get this bad reputation," he said.

ISTOCK

An African pygmy hedgehog

Hedgehogs may be in for a tough time north of the border, too. Last year, a Toronto city councillor asked municipal staff to study adding animals including hedgehogs to the city's list of prohibited species. Flamingoes, penguins, walruses, vultures and seals are also in his sights. METRO

What happens when it all goes wrong

In the past couple of decades, there've been a number of high-profile cases in Canada of exotic pets killing their owners:

• In 2007, 32-year-old Tanya Dumstrey-Soos was mauled by a tiger owned by her fiancé at a farm in 100 Mile House, B.C., while several children, including one of her own, watched. It's thought that the tiger didn't intentionally attack her, but rather was trying to play with her skirt as she stood outside its enclosure talking to it. The tiger, Gangus, was the only one of three tigers on the farm who wasn't declawed, and Dumstrey-Soos died of her injuries. Animals on the farm also included a lion and a lemur, and a variety of officials and animal welfare advocates said they'd had ongoing concerns about the farm.

• In 1992, 28-year-old Mark Neville of Brampton, Ont., was strangled to death by his five-metre-long pet Burmese python. At the time, the death prompted calls for consistent legislation on exotic pets, but unlike many provinces, Ontario still doesn't have provincial standards on the issue.

The investigating coroner said Neville had visited a friend's house where there was a shedding cat, and it's believed that later, when he put his hand in the python's enclosure, it smelled food and attacked.

• In early 2010, 66-year-old Norman Buwalda was killed at his home in Southwold, Ont., as he entered the cage of a 650-pound Siberian tiger. No one witnessed the attack, and police said they don't know why it happened. Buwalda was the chairman of the Canadian Exotic Animal Owner's Association, and had five wild cats, including a lion and a cougar. Six years previously, a 350-pound tiger seriously injured a boy visiting the property. METRO

You know that an octopus can make a tasty deep-fried appetizer, but did you know people keep them as pets? Read Metro tomorrow to find out which Hollywood star once had a cephalopod about the house.

ISTOCK

'If you're not prepared to devote your life to your pet monkey, please don't get one'

Lessons from Darwin. The former owner of the Ikea monkey says having a primate in the house takes time, energy and resources

ROSS ROMANIUK
Metro in Regina

After her pet monkey's romp around a Toronto-area Ikea, Yasmin Nakhuda has been struggling to get it back. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

She and what had been her pet monkey have made headlines in Canada for more than a year, since the primate managed to get out of her car outside a Toronto Ikea store and scamper around the property in late 2012.

Yasmin Nakhuda, a Toronto lawyer, is trying to get Darwin back through an appeal of an Ontario court ruling that has since kept the monkey at a primate sanctuary.

Metro asked Nakhuda about her case, and about having primates as pets.

Are you optimistic about your chance of reclaiming legal ownership of Darwin through your court appeal?
We are still trying to get him back but since the matter is still being reviewed for appeal purposes, I cannot make any further comments regarding chances of winning.

Do you feel that monkeys such as Darwin make good pets for people in Canada?
Monkeys are not pets for everyone. But if the owner is very dedicated, loving, educated about primate needs and ready and willing to learn, then a monkey can be more than a pet — it can become part of one's family. Monkeys are intelligent and it is untrue that all monkeys are aggressive. Some monkeys work as licensed waiters in Japan, while others are trained and work as helpers for the disabled.

Visit metronews.ca to watch a video of monkeys working as waiters in Japan.

Do you have any advice for other people who might be considering trying to acquire monkeys or other animals that are deemed exotic or foreign to Canada?
If you are not prepared to devote your life to your pet monkey, then please don't get one. However, if you do and you are able to earn the love and respect of your pet monkey, a pet monkey can be one of the greatest companions you can have in your life.

As for other exotic pets, I own an African Grey parrot and a Scarlet Macaw and they are equally great pets given their intelligence, but again, they need a lot of attention and care and one has to be able to afford expensive toys, food and supplements on an ongoing basis.

Have an adventure with Darwin

Darwin's Ikea shopping trip may be over in real life, but it continues online in the form of a video game which you can find at ikeamonkeyshirt.com. Barnabas Wornoff, an animation professor at Toronto's Seneca College, took about a week to create the game with a group of former students. Players can control the shearling coat-wearing monkey as it wanders through the parking lot in search of Allen keys, pegs and other parts needed to build a Billy wall shelf, all the while dodging rogue shopping carts and Ikea customers. Wornoff said the monkey dances when the game is completed. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bromance brewing? Barack and Stephen pack on PDA after private rendezvous

They don't see eye to eye on the major irritant between their two countries, but Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President Barack Obama projected a bit of genuine warmth at the so-called Three Amigos summit on Wednesday.

It may have been the sunny, high-altitude climes in the scenic Spanish colonial corner of Toluca, the hometown of their host, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto.

Or it may have been the fact that both Harper and Obama had staked out their positions in advance on the divisive Keystone XL pipeline project: the prime minister wants approval, the president wants to respect the approval process.

During their 30-minute private discussion in Mexico, Obama at least appeared to have politely heard out Harper on the TransCanada project.

The president then had affectionate words for Canadians and for Harper, calling him "Stephen" at one point during his remarks after the two leaders strolled through an enormous Toluca greenhouse.

"My brother-in-law is Canadian, so you know I have to love Canadians," Obama said to laughter.

But he added that the fact that Canadian and American men's and women's hockey teams are soon facing off in the ongoing Winter Games could cause him to "not feel as warm toward Canadians until the Olympic matches are over."

Harper echoed Obama's light-hearted tone during his own brief comments.

"Barack, it's always great to see you, and I like my brother-in-law too," Harper said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nebraska

The long-delayed Keystone XL pipeline project suffered a major setback Wednesday when a Nebraska district judge ripped up a state law that could have forced landowners to allow the pipeline through their property.

Market Minute

DOLLAR 90.24¢ (-1.08¢)

TSX 14,119.73 (+42.26)

OIL $103.31 US (+$0.88)

GOLD $1,320.40 US (-$4)

Natural gas: $6.10 US (+$0.54)
Dow Jones: 16,040.56 (-89.84)

Electronic currency

Ivory tower gets lesson in Bitcoin, with $10,000 gift

In what may be the first college donation of the new electronic currency, a Bitcoin entrepreneur has donated $10,000 US worth of the digital money to a Washington college.

The University of Puget Sound said on Wednesday it had received a donation of 14.5 coins of the currency.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cuts sow seeds of discontent among Greek farmers

A farmer shouts slogans during a protest outside the Greek parliament against government tax policies in Athens on Wednesday. About 4,000 people, including civil servant unions, took part in the peaceful demonstration outside the House of Parliament. Greece's conservative-led government has committed to continue spending cuts and economic reforms in exchange for billions of euros in international rescue loans. THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Our true patriot love for Facebook

O (boy) Canada.
With glowing faces ... from our smartphones we stand on guard for the social network

Canada was one of the first countries to go completely crazy for Facebook and now the social network is saying we're leading the charge with mobile usage, too.

There are 19 million Canadians who access Facebook at least once a month and 14 million who log in every single day, says Jordan Banks, the head of Facebook Canada.

Those numbers haven't really changed since the summer, when Banks last gave an update on user counts, but mobile is growing.

The number of users who log in with a phone or tablet at least once a month is now at 15 million, up about 15 per cent from 13 million. And the number of mobile users accessing Facebook daily is up about six per cent to 10 million, from 9.4 million in August.

"Essentially we're getting 50 per cent of Canadian (Internet users) on Facebook every day and the exciting part for us as marketers is that when you look at the composition of how those people are accessing Facebook, it's more increasingly on a mobile device than ever before," says Banks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

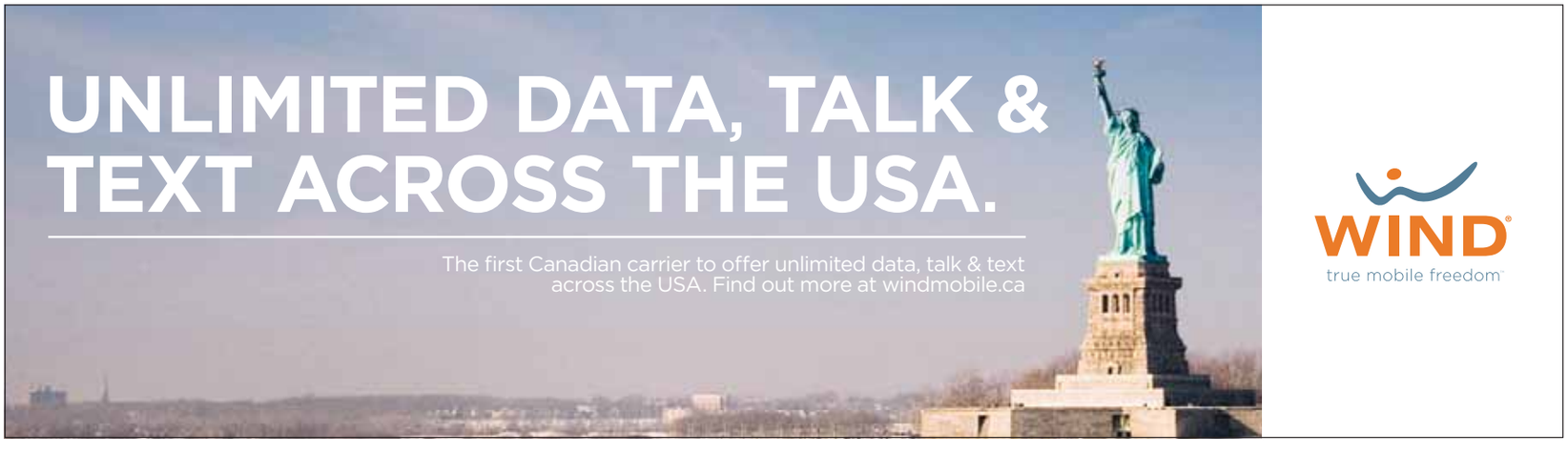
New national pastime?

"We're seeing people check their phones 20 times a day for Facebook — status updates and news feed posts and checking in — so it's really become like a Canadian reflex, if you will, to access your phone, whether you're at a bus stop or a hockey game or sitting at home watching TV."

Jordan Banks, head of Facebook Canada

Record-breaking buy

Facebook is buying mobile messaging service WhatsApp for up to $19 billion US in cash and stock, by far the company's largest acquisition.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OLYMPICS BRING OUT THE WORST

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Olympic officials love to wax eloquent about how sports can help us celebrate humanity as one, as can be illustrated in this history of the Games:

1896: The modern Olympic Games are created to promote world peace.

1897: World peace declared.

This timeline, though exhaustive, is not wholly accurate. In fact, the Olympics solve society's problems with only the same proficiency that pop songs alleviate world hunger.

While I won't claim to know the hearts of the amazing athletes, I can talk about the average sports fans' humanity during these Olympics in Sochi. Their emotions are not always the Olympian ideal.

Rage: Sports always attracts angry fans: hockey fans who would gladly dismember a 14-year-old linesman; baseball fans apoplectic about strike calls they can't possibly see; MMA fans who fill in most of evolution's missing links. But the Olympics teach us that the most terrifying creature of all is the figure skating fan who is convinced their favourite skaters were stiffed.

It's satisfying in a way. People who mock me for yelling at the TV during a Bruins game positively have a Salchow every four years because someone on Team Canada got "robbed." It's an Olympic tradition. This wouldn't happen if Olympic figure skating had fighting like the North American version, but that's a debate for later.

Fear: What do you suppose is the hardest job in the world? Doctor? Air traffic controller? Olympian? No, the Olympics prove time and again that the hardest job is creating a mascot that is not a horrifying abomination.

It's a life rule. There are no funny clowns, no sexy feet and no mascots that will not haunt your dreams. The Athens mascots appeared to be phalluses wearing coloured condoms, perhaps to laud the birth of civilization. The London mascots were one-eyed demon creatures, probably to promote the city's Olympian level of CCTV cameras.

At first the Sochi bear seemed like a fool-proof idea. Who doesn't like teddy bears? However, the version at the opening ceremonies looked like a drunken uncle who should delete his Internet browsing history more often. Meanwhile, the version that stalks Olympic venues almost looks like an everyday bear mascot — except that he has cold, dead shark eyes. He will have children leaving their night lights on until at least the 2016 Summer Games. And who knows what monstrosity we might be faced with then?

Schadenfreude: If my workplace and favourite bar are any indication, two things always get big cheers from crowds at the Olympics:

1.) A Canadian hockey player scores a goal.

2.) An athlete from another country falls over.

The sport might be one fans had not heard of 10 minutes ago — Ladies' Super-G Bobsled Cross — but if there's a chance at gold, we want our opponents crushed. And, if necessary, their pelvises.

In short, the Olympics aren't the best of humanity, on either side of the TV screen. They're just … humanity, which includes braggarts, fools and outright villains, to go along with the kind-hearted, the wise and the heroes.

And despite my cynical take, I still believe in heroes. After all, somebody has to slay the damn bear.

ZOOM

All that glitters isn't gold

ANNE OLLILA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Finnish reindeer dabbed with paint

A reindeer is seen with fluorescent antlers after a test in which Finnish herders dabbed it with fluorescent paint. Rudolph the reindeer is having a glittering antler makeover — the latest attempt to halt some of the thousands of road deaths of the roaming caribou in the wilds of Finland.

Anne Ollila, of the Finnish Reindeer Herders' Association, says the antlers of 20 reindeer have been painted with various fluorescent dyes to see how the animals react and whether the paints are resistant to the harsh Arctic climate.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roaming free

200,000

If successful, animals with glittering antlers will be free to roam Lapland — a vast, deserted area in northern Finland where herders tend to some 200,000 reindeer.

Reflective tape

- The Finnish Reindeer Association says reflectors and reflective tape have proven unsuccessful as reindeer have torn them off — and road signs warning drivers of roaming reindeer often are stolen by tourists as souvenirs.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

Looks like oversharing social media users are learning from their mishaps as a wave of apps touting online anonymity are quietly creeping into cyberspace. Users wanting to publicly praise or put down that pretty girl, berate their boss or wax poetic have carved out online spaces to do so without having to worry about said pretty girl, boss, etc.

ISTOCKIMAGES

Whisper:
Posts run the gamut from guilty pleasures to deep thoughts (#ThereIsNoProof) in this Tumblr-like confessional space.

Shrtwv:
Location-based sharing means you share your anonymous thoughts, photos, etc., with other Shrtwv users in the same vicinity (no, this is not meant to be the latest Grindr)

Secret:
Like other social media sites, you're still sharing your "secrets" with your pals, but you get to do so incognito.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: The idea of Trudeau rolling papers was originally the Cons' plan to disrupt the Liberals. Do they help or hinder Trudeau's image?

@Russell_Barth: the irony of these papers (AND the #cpc's mad assertions) is that Justin isn't *actually* going to legalize #pot

@chlobotxo: i think it's hilarious. It helps by showing the Cons are traditional bullies

@ac_awesome: So instead of saying he flip-flops, opponents are accusing him of Zigzags.

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

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Make it a Talking Stick and Chutzpah! filled week

Festivals. Experience art with native and Jewish themes

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

Margo Kane stars as Nana in Michael Tremblay's For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again, which plays at the York Theatre from Feb. 21-28 as part of the annual Talking Stick Festival. SUBMITTED

The Winter Olympics is a grand stage where many athletes express themselves with sticks. Hockey players, for example. Skiers, too. Even curlers can make a bold statement with a couple of well-timed brooms.

In Aboriginal circles, a stick is used as an instrument of democracy. The talking stick gets passed around; only the person holding it is allowed to talk. Then there's the Talking Stick Festival, which has given voice to Aboriginal stories and performance for more than a decade.

In fact, this is the festival's 13th anniversary. It kicked off on Tuesday and takes place in venues throughout the city until Mar. 2. Watch festival artistic director Margo Kane perform in For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again (by Michael Tremblay), a piece that explores the relationship between mother and child. It's at the York Theatre from Feb. 21-28.

Also performing at Talking Stick is singer Crystal Shawanda, Native Earth Performing Arts (In Spirit), Gwaandak Theatre (The Hours that Remain), A Tribe Called Red, Axis Theatre Company (Raven Meets the Monkey King), and Ed Bourgeois and Jack Dalton (Raven's Radio Hour).

Tickets and festival passes for the festival range from $12 to $40. More info at fullcircle.ca.

Chutzpah! You could say that all performers have chutzpah. After all, that's really what it takes to get up on stage. Well, that and some talent. Which brings us to Chutzpah!, the Jewish performing arts festival that runs from Feb. 22 to Mar. 9 at various venues across the city. It features a robust dance program that includes a world premiere by Hofesh Shector; as well as Canadian premieres by Richard Siegal and Barak Marshall, danced by Los Angeles-based BodyTraffic. Then there's Italy's ImPerfect Dancers, Idan Sharabi and Dancers (Israel), Ate9 Dance Company (US/Israel), and new work by Chutzpah! resident artist Donald Sales/Project 20.

Or check out its slate of musical performers, including saxophone virtuoso Uri Gurvich., Dudu Tassa and the Kuwaitis, and Yemen Blues.

There's also comedy (25 Questions for a Jewish Mother, Brad Zimmerman) and theatre (Hirsch, Tiny Music) in the mix, too.

Ticket prices vary. More information at chutzpahfestival.com.

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Katy Perry ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Wedding fireworks for Katy and John?

Katy Perry is sending the gossip world into a tizzy by sporting the same diamond ring on a very suspicious finger for the past few days. The first time, we all chalked it up to her being fashionable — but then the singer had the audacity to wear the art-deco-influenced ring yet again at the Elle Style Awards on Tuesday in London. "What does it mmmmeeee-aaaannnnn?" your brain is undoubtedly asking, since we are all conditioned to be concerned with this for some reason. We wish we knew — so far both the Perry and John Mayer camps are being mum on the situation. One thing is for sure: The only way she could troll us any harder is if she started wearing a fake baby bump.

Ellen and Portia don't need a ring to prove their love

Ellen DeGeneres is eager to put to rest rumours circulating in some tabloids that her marriage to Portia De Rossi is on the rocks. "The tabloids had a photo of Portia not wearing her wedding ring. She goes, 'I didn't wear it because when I ride horses and I'm holding the reins, it gives me a blister,'" DeGeneres explains to People magazine. "The truth is — and this is corny — I fall more in love with Portia all the time. I really do. She surprises me all the time. It's what anyone experiences when you find that person that gets you."

Ellen DeGeneres

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Hey LaBeouf, why don't you #STARTCREATING your own stuff?

MELINDA TAUB
Metro World News in New York

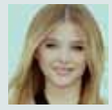
Shia LaBeouf has been all over the tabloids and the blogs and the Twitter lately. But for those who don't follow celebrity gossip on any medium, Shia has them covered too — they just have to look up into the sky.

LaBeouf has taken to skywriting for the third time, hiring planes to write "#STARTCREATING" in the sky above Los Angeles, according to E! Online. His previous messages were "I am sorry Daniel Clowes" and "#STOPCREATING," both in January.

It's great to have Shia's permission to start making stuff. I hope he follows his own advice, since he's never created anything in particular. LaBoeuf's meltdown/art project/generous subsidy to L.A.'s skywriting industry began in December, when his short film, HowardCantour.com, was revealed to be a ripoff of a Daniel Clowes comic, Justin M. Damiano. Since then, he's tweeted a slew of plagiarized quotes and apologies, hired the aforementioned skywriters, and last week held an "art installation" in which he sat in a room with a paper bag over his head reading "I am not famous anymore" while weeping — which some would say was a ripoff of Marina Abromović's The Artist is Present.

In case you can't tell, I am heartily sick of this kid — he ripped an artist off, got caught, and he's been trying to reposition his screw-up as art ever since. I would rather see Justin Bieber get an Oscar than hear another word from LaBeouf on the subject.

Twitter



@ChloeGMoretz
strangest thing just happened to my phone it wouldn't take a charge so i did a full restart and bingo.. charging.. weird.

@NiallOfficial
First time we have all been together for a while now! lookin forward t seeing the lads ! #BRITs2014

@josswhedon
Stairs are so serious

Patrick Stewart

Patrick Stewart has a gay old time with Guardian gaffe

At least Patrick Stewart has a decent sense of humour. The former Star Trek: the Next Generation star was misidentified as gay by the Guardian in an article about X-Men co-star Ellen Page's recent coming out. "The third paragraph originally said, 'Some gay people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart, think Page's coming out speech is newsworthy.' This should have read, 'Some people, such as Sir Patrick Stewart,'" a statement from the newspaper read. Stewart, who married longtime girlfriend Sunny Ozell in September, took it in stride, posting to Twitter, "It makes for a nice change. At least I didn't wake up to the Internet telling me I was dead again."

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The runway midway

The fashion industry's finest have flocked to New York and London these past two weeks as part of Fall/Winter 2014 Fashion Month. Before they pick up their passports and jet away on the Paris and Milan legs of the journey, here's a taste of what Metro's gurus of glam have witnessed from fashion's front lines thus far.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Tommy Hilfiger (NYC)

The first look? Surprise, surprise, it's plaid. An olive parka, check dress and hiking boots opens the lineup of rugged, outdoorsy looks. The vaguely vintage-flavoured duffle coats, shearling jackets, chunky sweaters, Fair Isle knits and fleece dresses have a sporty athleticism to them that imply Tommy's girls do more than sip hot chocolate inside a lodge.

Major trends: Blanket references in the form of dresses, skirts and coats.

What this will mean for your wardrobe: Durable, classic winter wear that really does marry fashion and function.

Marc by Marc Jacobs (NYC)

The autumn/winter '14 girl is all flamboyant sportiness, dressed for a club night in a mix of ninja and BMX gear. Plus all of the sneaker comebacks we've seen in the past year were rendered forgettable thanks to a single shoe in Crayola shades of red and blue that is part raver, part spaceman.

The major trends: Plays on volume — blanket-style wraps, layering and wide leg trousers.

What this will mean for your wardrobe: Judging by my social media feeds, the shoes were the most memorable takeaway from the show. The more "out there" the sneaker the better.

Bora Aksu (London)

After a handful of monochrome skirted looks, colour appears in the form of Barbie pink. Think Lolita-meets-Victorian-meets-plastic-fantastic. And get ready to embrace that horrible '90s sequin stretch fabric: it's back, sliced into jackets, waistlines and fishtail pencil skirts. Ponchos and capes are popular up top — only, "floatier" than we've seen them before. Here they're more like mosquito nets. Pretty ones, mind you.

The playlist: Lively flamenco with a Carla Bruni interlude.

The key trends: Pink, ponchos, A-line skirts

Issa (London)

The strength, and what unites this collection, with its varying motifs of stamped flowers, bulbous knits and lattice prints, is the size of it all. Everything is big, from the wafting, blanket-like coats that much of the audience is already wearing to the Balenciaga-esque rounded sleeves on outerwear and tops. My standout piece — the wackiest of all the wearable Issa fare — is a zigzag printed monochrome jacket with perfectly curved shoulders.

The major trends: Ponchos and oversized, rounded coats.

What this will mean for your wardrobe in six months' time: Silhouette is going to factor into your buying purchases more than usual.

Vivienne Westwood (London)

This show was about vintage Vivienne Westwood Red Label. Even the colour palette is true to the brand name, with a tongue-in-cheek heart-shaped suit. The looks were positively pared-down: a nostalgic retrospective of eras gone by with headscarves, roomy overcoats, and those ubiquitous Westwood cocktail dresses — all very commercially viable with enough of a dash of the Dame's kook.

The scene: Vivienne Westwood's faithful friends.

What this will mean for your wardrobe in six months' time: Granny chic with headscarves and oversized practical coats.

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Add pizzazz to every room in the house with playful pink

Get the pinks out. It's the unexpected hue that can amp up or soften any decor

This spring, pinks are popping up all over home decor — the softer versions soothing and nurturing, the bright ones bouncy and vivacious.

Warm pink light can be flattering, so designers have long employed tricks like painting lampshade interiors in those hues or switching regular bulbs for soft pink ones.

"Pink's such a fun colour to play around with. I see it two ways — dusty, light and classic, or vibrant, 'statement' and sharp," says Boston-based designer Taniya Nayak. "The former adds subtle whispers of elegance, while the latter turns up the volume in a space."

Eddie Ross, East Coast editor for Better Homes & Gardens, is another fan.

"Pink is back, and it's all grown up. Paired with stronger hues like navy, chocolate or grey, pink looks sophisticated and surprising," he says.

Leave 'em blushing

"Pink is such a fun colour to play around with."
Designer Taniya Nayak

Ross suggests several ways to incorporate the colour for different effects: "When you cover a sofa or chair in a light pink, it acts like a neutral. Swap out throw pillows for a completely different look. Light pink bedding looks great with just about any skin tone. Light pink linen mats in simple white frames with black and white photos look crisp."

His favourite pink paint shades include Devine Color's Devine Poodle — "great on dining room chairs in a lustrous high gloss"; Benjamin Moore's subtle Affinity Proposal for walls; and Farrow & Ball's Blushes — "a strong pink that would be stunning on a ceiling paired with cream and grey."

Valspar's Rosario Ridge and Universe Quartz Pink are two others to consider. Sherwin-Williams' Spun Sugar and Malted Milk are as tasty-looking as their names, as are Peach Parfait and Fruit Shake from Benjamin Moore.

San Francisco designer Tineke Triggs adds a deep pink desk to a home office, or a crushed berry ceiling to a bedroom. She pairs them with other bold colours like crisp white and egg yolk, or soft tans and greys.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pretty with pink

- Combine pink accessories with contemporary pieces, or add a hit of surprise in a room full of rustic, traditional or industrial elements.
- Pink looks great next to reflective and textured materials such as mirrors, metallics and velvets, but also alongside linen, burlap, weathered pine and rattan.

Pink accents that pack a punch

CB2's City Slicker table resembles a big chunk of neon pink bubblegum; a fun piece like this is a great way to play with the colour. CB2.COM

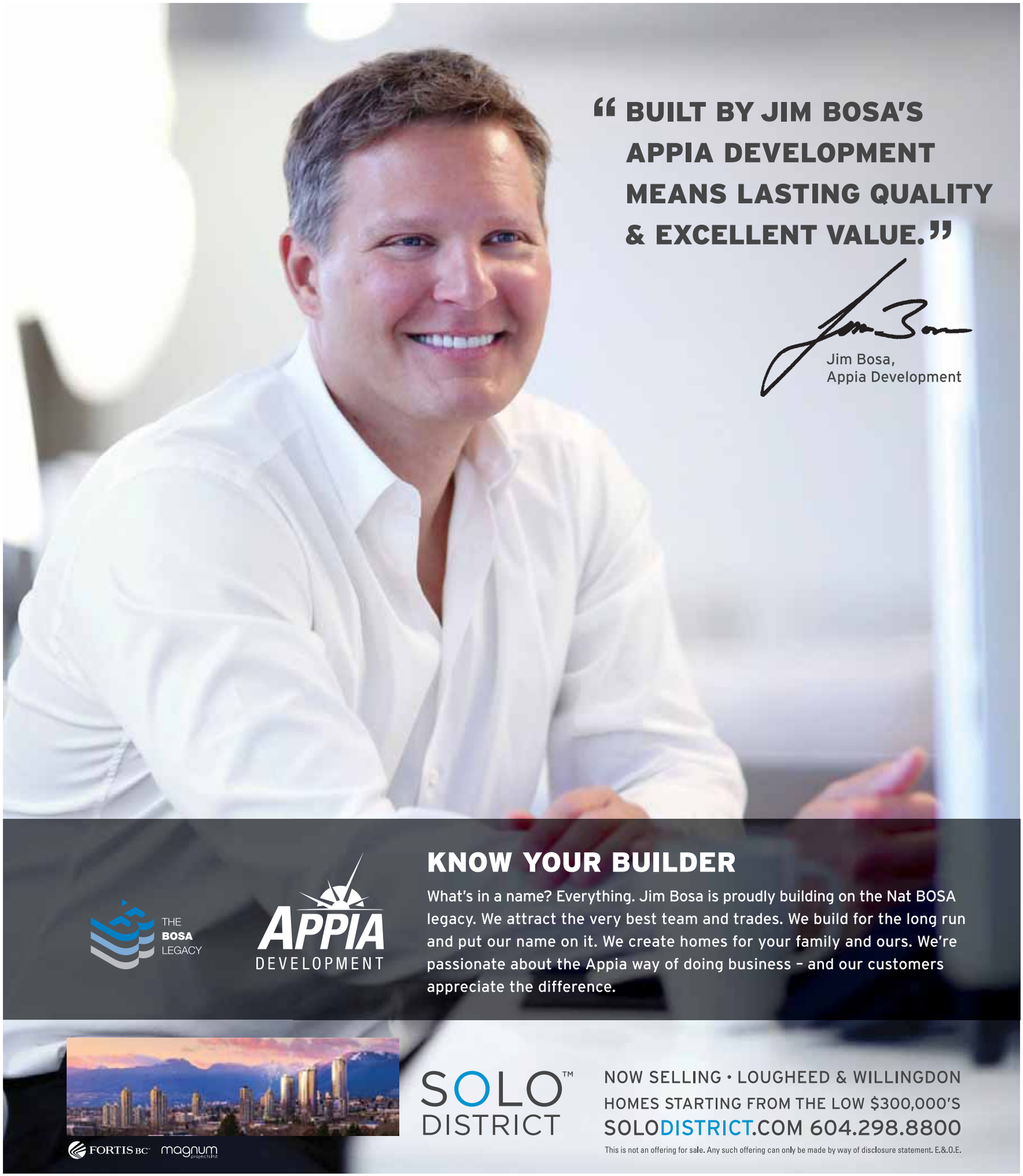
Homegoods.com has an accent chair in a vibrant pink damask pattern that adds a touch of traditional style in a contemporary hue. HOMEGOODS.COM/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lamps Plus stocks some pink lighting that includes Robert Abbey's rectangular Schiaparelli Pink ceramic table lamp with a Lucite base, and OVO's glass lamp in elegant fuchsia. LAMPSPLUS.COM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crate & Barrel's Clara chair is covered in a gentle watercolour floral that brings spring gardens to mind. CRATEANDBARREL.COM

Don't be afraid to shop the kids' furniture stores: Land of Nod's got a sophisticated, hand-tufted floral rug in pastel pink. LANDOFNOD.COM

CB2's Vapor chair is Lucite-tinged pink; acrylic's a strong trend in furniture this season, so this piece gives extra style bang for the buck. CB2.COM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DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
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Add glam to any book case with crystal-encrusted bird speakers (also the perfect accompaniment for a perfume bottle collection in the bathroom). ChicBuds Crystal Fauvette Bird Speaker, $46 each, bedbathandbeyond.ca.

Breakdancing not required, but bring the '80s back with iHome's rubber and metal Boombox Wireless Speaker, $220, urbanoutfitters.com.

An old-time music centre that replicates a vintage airplane control panel. Records, tapes, CDs and mp3 capabilities; great for any dad. Innovative Technology Aviator Turntable Wooden Music Centre, $200, thesource.ca.

Croon to your favourite tunes in reclaimed style that would look just as chic in a library as it would in a loft space. Gramophone iPad docking station with dry oak base, $300, restorationhardware.com.

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Double duty calls if space is tight

Accessorize with objects you can use. Multi-purpose furnishings are the key to living large in a small space

Decorating with a purpose allows homeowners to maximize the space in a small home.

When every square foot is at a premium in a condo, apartment or house, it's important to make sure even the decorative accessories have a use.

"Minimize useless objects," says Angela Robinson, a Vancouver interior designer. "I know especially in residential design homeowners tend to buy a lot of decorative objects thinking it will make their home feel cosy and more complete, but I think you can achieve that same look and feel by purchasing useful objects that also look pretty."

Robinson suggests using sculptural or dramatic salt and pepper shakers in a kitchen instead of buying pieces that take up space without serving a purpose.

Making a small space efficient also requires looking at the overall surfaces of a home differently. Robinson says homeowners need to look at vertical spaces as opportunities for storage and organization.

"I personally live in a smaller space (my place is about 700 square feet), and one thing I found really helpful for my organization and storage is to maximize my wall and vertical space," she says. "Inside my cupboard doors I have hung all my pots and pans so they are accessible and I don't have to stack everything."

According to Ottawa interior designer Laura Boisvert, homeowners often either fill their small space with too much furniture or not enough.

Boisvert says the most common problems her clients face is around not enough storage and seating.

"Either they are afraid that if they add more it will make it feel small, or because they need more storage or seating they purchased furniture that shouldn't belong," she says. "You have to find a balance and the best way to do this is with pieces of furniture that serve multiple purposes."

Poufs add a fun, playful element to a small space while serving as extra seating or foot stools. COURTESY JANIS NICOLAY

Both Boisvert and Robinson say there are various options for homeowners looking to purchase furniture that does double or triple duty. From ottomans with self-contained storage to coffee tables with drawers and shelves, Boisvert suggests looking for furniture to maximize a small space.

While having furniture and decorative items that serve a purpose is key to an efficient small space, Boisvert says paint and lighting can also help make it appear larger.

"Lighter colours recede so they make the space appear larger," she says. "Lighting is also important to any space especially a smaller one. If you have a really dimly lit space with little lighting it will feel cave-like, darker and smaller than if you have lots of nice lighting." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bigger is better

Instead of filling a small space with many small objects, Angela Robinson recommends using larger bold art and furniture.

- "I think a lot of people think because they are in a smaller, tighter space they should bring in appropriately scaled furniture, artwork and accessories, and I don't necessarily agree with that," she says.
- "I think often with small spaces going with larger-scale or bigger pieces of artwork and accessories along with bolder pieces of furniture, you can actually make a space feel more dramatic and larger than if you were to fill a space with small dainty objects. It's just visually more calming if you bring in fewer larger items than many smaller items."

Make the most of things

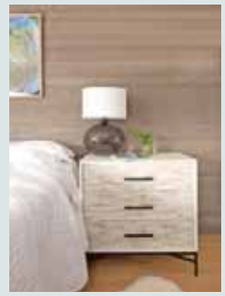
Up against the wall

Remember to use your wall space. There are opportunities to organize and store your items in decorative ways on your walls (or in more practical ways inside your closet doors or walls.

Don't shelve that idea

Organization and storage can be fun. Consider playful shelving that can double as storage and also serve as a visual treat.

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY JANIS NICOLAY/ THE CANADIAN PRESS



Try something different on the side

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Rustic barn doors add some natural warmth

DIY. Refurbished wood is an easy way to give the home a handsome hint of pastoral charm

Every home could use a little country charm, and nothing says country living like a rustic sliding barn door. An inspiring alternative to French doors, this DIY project is a great way to inject natural wood tones into your home or create a popping statement piece with a vivid paint job. It can be adapted for almost any style or budget and will have a lasting impression on visitors for both its design and simplicity.

Find a door that will measure up

For the most authentic look, check out weekend markets or second-hand stores for a reclaimed barn door. It should be slightly larger than the doorway, allowing for a few inches of overlap on either side and at the top. If you're unable to find a proper fit, it's easy to build a custom door after a quick trip to the hardware store. For really large openings, build two doors that will slide together to meet in the middle.

Mount the track above the doorway

Once a door has been chosen, it's time to purchase the hardware necessary to make it glide effortlessly. The right hardware will ensure the door stays safely secured upright and tucked closely to the wall. The best way to achieve this is with a mounted track above the doorway. This option puts a lot of weight on the wall so it's best to screw the mount in to studs.

Install the track brackets

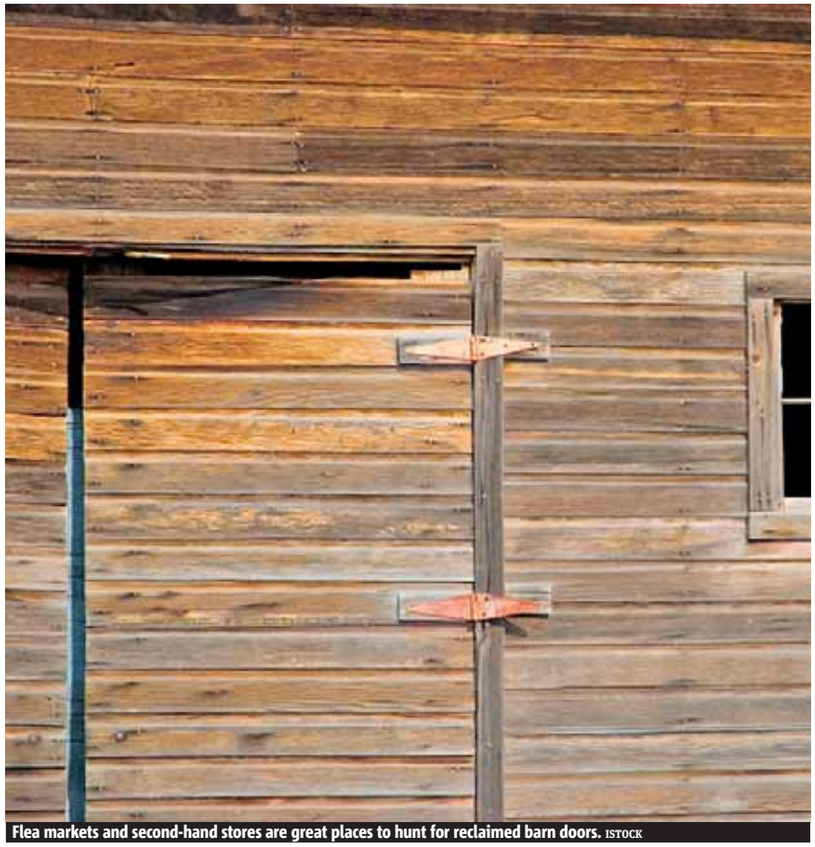
The track brackets are installed to the top of the door and will allow it to hang from the track with rollers. Install one bracket to the top corners of the door following the manufacturer's instructions. A regular sized door will likely only require two rollers but check with a professional if you're unsure.

Attach the rollers and hang the door

Once the brackets are installed, connect the rollers and fasten tightly. With the help of a friend or family member, stand the door upright and slowly lower the rollers on to the track. The track should remain stable and not flex under the weight of the door. Give your new barn door a few tries and do your best line dance move to celebrate.

Rescue Renovation

- For more renovation ideas, tune in to Rescue Renovation on Thursdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.



Flea markets and second-hand stores are great places to hunt for reclaimed barn doors. ISTOCK

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Make a bedroom you want to lie in

Snooze control. Create a cocoon that's perfect for you with designer tips on breaking the usual decorating rules

Designer Brian Patrick Flynn layered his windows with black-out shades from Texton and custom drapery panels lined with blackout liner in his own bedroom in Los Angeles, to help control noise from busy, nightlife-centric Sunset Boulevard and light from the bright California sun. ZEKE RUELAS/BRIAN PATRICK FLYNN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

We're told a well-designed master bedroom should be an oasis of romantic calm. It's also supposed to be the practical place where you store clothing and get a good night's sleep, and it may also be where you watch television, pay bills and even set up a home office.

That's a lot to ask of a single room.

On the bright side, says interior designer Brian Patrick Flynn, you have plenty of decorating freedom. "Since bedrooms are all about self-expression and comforts," he says, "you can break the rules as much as you want."

We've asked Flynn, founder of Flynnside Out Productions, and two other design experts — Betsy Burnham of Burnham Design and Molly Luetkemeyer of M. Design Interiors — for tips on breaking those rules with style to create the ultimate master bedroom.

Only the calmest colours

Forget trendy shades or your favourite bright colours. Burnham advises sticking to a soothing palette of ivory and white, evoking a luxury hotel room. "You can layer colour into that if you want to," she says.

If your idea of peace and quiet involves deeper colours, Flynn suggests navy blues or black-brown tones.

And if you really want bolder colour or patterns, Luetkemeyer recommends using a single pattern throughout your bedroom. This "en suite" look involves using the same fabric for curtains and bedspread, and even covering the walls in the same pattern.

"Even a busy pattern won't feel too chaotic if you're consistent" in using it throughout the room, she says.

Big beds in small rooms

Think your medium-size or small bedroom can't handle a gorgeous four-poster bed? Burnham says a bed like that can serve as "a statement piece" that brings lots of style. It actually frees up space, because you won't need any extra decorative pieces of furniture for pizzazz.

Flynn agrees, as long as the bedroom isn't extremely small and the nightstands are in proportion. One of his pet peeves is a large bed flanked by tiny tables, which can make the tables look like they belong in a dollhouse.

Soften everything

These designers are seeing a trend toward upholstered beds and headboards, and even upholstery fabric used on walls.

"It's this idea that you're being completely cocooned and buffered from the world," Luetkemeyer says. For some clients, she has also upholstered the inside of armoires or other storage pieces to create a complete sense of softness.

With softness in mind, Flynn suggests using more than one layer of window treatment: "I usually layer black-out shades with custom, pleated drapery panels," he says. "This softens the hard edges of the room, helps with noise control and also allows the homeowner to sleep in as late as they want."

If you're worried that all that softness will make the room too feminine, Burnham suggests adding just a few sharper, cleaner lines for balance. Choose sleek, mid-century vintage lamps to place on either side of an upholstered bed. Or opt for a dresser with simple, clean lines rather than a piece that's ornate and curvy.

Banish electronics

It may sound radical, but Luetkemeyer hears from clients now that they're ready to remove the TV and all gadgets from their bedrooms. "People are saying, 'I'm in such overload all day long, and I'm reachable within an inch of myself. I want to have one place where it's really mine.'"

Burnham sees the beginnings of a similar trend, though for many people the habit of checking email in bed or watching TV before they go to sleep is a hard one to kick.

If you have a desk in your bedroom, consider relocating it. And try plugging in your phone and other gadgets somewhere else in your home at night so you won't be tempted to check them.

Skip nightstands

Flynn suggests using 30-inch-tall dressers or chests instead of traditional nightstands: "I'll hit up flea markets and find two different chests with very similar proportions," he says, using these less expensive pieces to flank a more expensive custom headboard or platform bed.

Luetkemeyer agrees that closed storage at bedside is a wise move for most people. It keeps necessities handy, but hides clutter to make your sleeping area look organized even when it isn't.

Pendants and sconces instead of table lamps

Chandeliers are often used in dining rooms and entryways to add glamour and drama. Flynn's tip? They "work just as well in bedrooms."

"I often install pendant lights over nightstands instead of using table lamps," he says, "especially if the headboard is tall and dramatic. Whenever possible, I try to use sculptural pendants which introduce interesting shapes to the room and I always, 100 per cent of the time, install them on dimmers." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Bright ideas now incandescent light bulbs are being phased out

New fixtures. A look at pros and cons of alternatives to inefficient classic light bulb

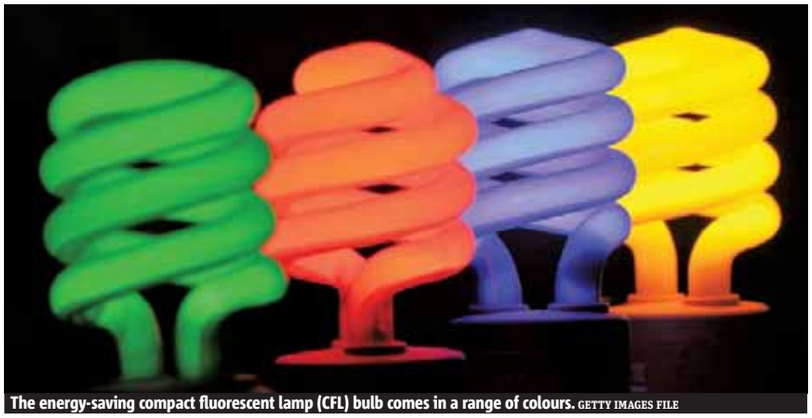
By the end of this year, Thomas Edison's classic incandescent light bulb, a fixture in homes and offices for more than a century, will disappear from the shelves.

As the bulbs are phased out in favour of more energy efficient ones, consumers will have some choices to make.

Some of the options cost a little more — and some a lot more — upfront. But you can save money in the long run by trimming your electricity bill.

Each bulb comes with pros and cons. It all comes down to the purpose of the illumination — to read a book, or light a closet.

Incandescent bulbs don't meet new energy performance standards, because up to 96 per cent of the energy used by the bulbs is turned into heat.



The energy-saving compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulb comes in a range of colours. GETTY IMAGES FILE

The average Canadian household has 25 light bulbs, so those inefficiencies add up.

New federal standards, which came into effect on New Year's Day, mean retailers can no longer buy 100W and 75W bulbs. By the end of year they will not be able to buy 60W and 40W bulbs either.

Ron Cleary, Home Depot Canada's senior merchant for electronics, isn't sorry to see them go.

"They're not long lasting and they're not energy efficient in any way at all," he said. "They were great a hundred years ago, [but not] now."

Katie Hockton, a spokeswoman for Canadian Tire, said some stores have already run out of 100W bulbs, and Cleary said most Home Depot locations expect to run out by late February.

Some specialty incandescent bulbs are exempt from the ban, including hardened utility bulbs, infrared and oven light bulbs. (The Natural Resources Canada web site has a full list.)

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

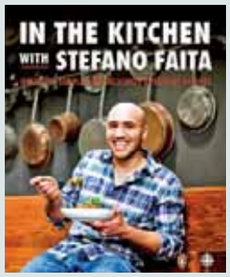
Lighting alternatives

- The bulbs closest to the old ones in terms of the quality of light cast is the halogen incandescent. These bulbs last two or three times longer and are about 28 per cent more efficient. They cast a bright, clean light, Cleary said.
- The most well-known energy efficient bulb is the compact fluorescent lamp (CFL), which was first introduced in the late '90s. The spiral-shaped bulbs are miniature versions of the long, tubular fluorescent lights.
- The bulbs use up to 75 per cent less electricity to produce the same amount of light as the old incandescent ones.
- "They last much longer — (up) to 10,000 hours," Clearly said.
- The bulbs come in a range of styles and colours, some of which work with dimmers, but the real advantage is the energy savings.
- The most expensive option is a light-emitting diode (LED) bulb. These bright, tiny bulbs have been common in Christmas lights and are now available in compact bulbs for regular use.
- LEDs have an average lifespan of 25,000 hours. A bulb used for three hours a day might not need to be replaced for more than 20 years.
- LEDs cost between $10 and $40 each but the price continues to fall as the quality improves. They come in soft white, bright white or daylight.

Stefano serves a cutlet above the rest

Cookbook of the Week

Effortless meals



Stefano Faita goes from the wildly popular TV show In the Kitchen with Stefano Faita to an easy-to-follow book of the same name. The collection includes Faita's favourite recipes (think Buttermilk Fried Chicken, Mango Cabbage Slaw, Cajun Home Fries and more) from the series as well as extra trips. The book covers everything from breakfast and dinner to snacks, salads, desserts and more. METRO

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

"Veal cutlets were in regular dinner rotation at home when I was young," writes Stefano Faita in his book In the Kitchen with Stefano Faita. "I was always so amazed at how quickly my mom made them and got them on the table — they cook up in no time.

"Serve your cutlets with a light side dish, such as sautéed cherry tomatoes (the recipe is right here!), or put a cutlet on a bun with some marinated artichokes. Yum!"

Ingredients

Breaded Veal Cutlets

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) all-purpose flour
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) milk
- 1 cup (250 ml) fresh or dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp (10 ml) chopped fresh herbs, such as sage or rosemary
- 4 large veal cutlets, pounded 1/4 inch (5 mm) thick
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) butter
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes

- 3 tbsp (45 ml) butter
- 1 1/2 lb (675 g) vine-ripened cherry tomatoes
- 1 tsp (5 ml) sugar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) each chopped fresh Italian parsley, marjoram, thyme

This recipe serves four. PHOTOS LEILA ASHTARI

1. To make the Breaded Veal Cutlets: Prepare a breading station by arranging 3 shallow dishes or pie plates with the following: flour in the first; eggs beaten with milk in the second; and bread crumbs, Parmesan and herbs stirred together in the third.

2. Season veal with salt and pepper. Dredge cutlets first in flour, then in egg mixture and lastly in bread crumb mixture.

3. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter with oil. When oil is hot, add cutlets and brown on each side, 3 to 5 minutes per side.

4. While cutlets are cooking, make the Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes: In a large sauté pan, melt butter over medium-high heat. When butter is golden brown, add tomatoes. Sprinkle them with sugar and season with salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and sauté tomatoes, stirring gently, until they start to soften and skins begin to wrinkle, about 5 minutes. Add the parsley, marjoram and thyme, mix well and remove from heat.

5. Serve cutlets with Sautéed Cherry Tomatoes.

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SPORTS 4

Humph Day in Sochi

Women's bobsled.
Canadian duo successfully defends its title won in Vancouver

Canada's Kaillie Humphries, left, and Heather Moyse celebrate winning the gold medal in women's bobsled at the Sochi Winter Olympics in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, on Wednesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kaillie Humphries arrived at the start house for her final bobsled run at the Sochi Games not knowing how much time she needed to make up to catch the leaders.

Her brakeman, Heather Moyse, knew but wasn't saying. She wanted her pilot to worry about her own run and not the clock.

"I just looked at her and I said, 'It's possible,'" Moyse said. "That's all Kaillie needed to know, that the gap wasn't closed but it was possible."

Humphries visualized the 17-turn track in her mind and set out to nail another consistent run. She delivered just that Wednesday night and it was enough to give them a second straight women's Olympic bobsled title, the first duo to achieve that goal.

"When I don't know times, I mean, ignorance is bliss," Humphries said.

The Canada 1 sled had a gap of 11-100ths of a second to close entering the final run. Moyse delivered with a strong push at the start, then Humphries took over from there.

Both were elated at the finish and satisfied knowing they did everything they could.

"For both of us to know we pushed the hardest we could have possibly pushed, I drove the track the very best that I knew how, when we got out of the sled on that fourth run both her and I — without even having to really say anything — knew that we had done everything in our power," Humphries said.

Quoted

"Winning gold is amazing, but walking away satisfied is better. After the third run I knew that if we did the business we could be on top."

Kaillie Humphries on overcoming a time deficit to win the women's bobsled.

With at least a silver locked up, they had a nervous two-minute wait in the finish area as Elana Meyers and Lauryn Williams completed their final run.

"I never wish bad on people but I was thinking, 'Just make a few mistakes, please,'" Humphries said.

The pressure seemed to get to the Americans, who had a few wobbles down the Sanki Sliding Center track and came up one-10th of a second short.

It would be gold once again for the Canadians, who were underdogs when they won at the Vancouver Games four years ago but favourites this time around.

Humphries, from Calgary, and Moyse, from Summerside, P.E.I., finished with a four-run time of three minutes 50.61 seconds. Meyers and Williams were second in 3:50.71.

The United States also won bronze, with Jamie Greubel and Aja Evans finishing a full second off the lead in 3:51.61. Edmonton's Jenny Ciochetti and Chelsea Valois of Zenon Park, Sask., were 13th in the Canada 2 sled in 3:54.49. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Serwa's climb to reach apex in Sochi

Inside the Vancouver Convention Centre last month, Kelsey Serwa stood up to the microphone and delivered a speech about competing as an Olympian.

Mentioned in there were the words "fear" and "anxiety."

Those words are appropriate when talking about Serwa's plight in getting back to the Olympics as a member of Canada's skicross team.

Serwa, who grew up in Kelowna, competed in the 2010 Games in Vancouver, finishing fifth. But a trip to Sochi looked like it might be in doubt when, two World Cup seasons ago, she suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament after a fall on a landing and underwent surgery to repair the damage.

She tore her ACL again, causing her to miss part of the 2012-13 season. Despite her injuries, the 24-year-old Serwa didn't just return to competition, she returned to the podium — a familiar place for her over the years, with 16 World Cup podium finishes since 2009. Among her triumphs was a first-place finish at the pre-Olympic race in Sochi last February.

She'll be competing for Canada in women's skicross Friday.

"I think at first there's always that uncertainty of will I ever be able to come back as good as I was before I got injured," Serwa said on Jan. 27.

"But I've been busting my butt and working really hard. I have a great support staff around me and team to get me back up to 100 per cent.

"You get emotions like that and it's about recognizing those emotions and making them into something constructive." CAM TUCKER/METRO

Quoted

"You get emotions like that and it's about recognizing those emotions and making them constructive."

Vancouver Olympic skicross competitor Kelsey Serwa on dealing with uncertainty after injury.

Hey Yzerman, 'you're lucky'

Goalier than thou.
Lightning prospect stands on his head in front of future GM as Latvians almost slay Goliath in Sochi

BRUCE BENNETT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

As Kristers Gudlevskis turned aside shot after shot, Sidney Crosby and his teammates wondered what it would take to beat the Latvian goaltender.

"Besides picking the puck up and throwing it in the net, what could you tell someone to do in those situations?" Crosby said.

Team Canada didn't quite have to resort to that, surviving a historic upset bid by Latvia with a 2-1 win in the quarter-finals of the Olympics on the strength of a late power-play goal by Shea Weber.

Despite Gudlevskis making 55 saves on 57 shots, coach Mike Babcock didn't sense any uneasiness on his bench. It's his hope that being in a tight, frustrating game will help Canada as it advances to face the rival Americans in the semifinals Friday.

"We just thought if we kept doing it, we'd get our chances, we'd get a break, we'd score a goal," Babcock said. "Did I want to win 7-1? Absolutely. Do I think it's better for my team that we won the way we did? For sure."

The next one looks tougher on paper than any of Canada's first four games in Sochi. At first glance, a matchup against 11th-seeded Latvia didn't seem like it would be much of a test for the gold-medal favourites.

Canada, Babcock insisted, did not take Latvia lightly. Watching coach Ted Nolan's group eliminate Switzerland should have been enough of a wake-up call.

Still, it was hard to expect this. After Patrick Sharp gave Canada a lead at the 13:37 mark of the first period, it looked like Gudlevskis wouldn't get beat again and the frustration crept in.

"It can get to you, I think, a little bit," winger Patrick Marleau said. "But you just got to keep persisting and think that next one's going to go in."

It didn't help that most of the game elapsed with a tie score after Lauris Darzins got a breakaway and beat Carey Price two minutes after Sharp's goal. And it didn't help that Canada played almost two full periods without John Tavares, who was hit by Arturs Kulda and is out for the rest of the tournament with a knee injury.

A controversial no-goal call in the third period that could have led to a Canadian penalty shot only added to the drama.

All the while, Canada had Gudlevskis and the Latvians under siege but couldn't break through. It's one thing to squeeze the sticks a little too tight, but another one altogether to have a goalie looking like a brick wall.

"Coming into this tournament we talked about facing adversity," defenceman Duncan Keith said. "There was a little bit there throughout this game. We didn't want to get frustrated with the score being tied."

Told he scared the entire country of Canada on Wednesday night, Gudlevskis said: "I hope so." Asked what he'd say to Team Canada executive director and Lightning general manager Steve Yzerman, the 21-year-old responded: "You're lucky."

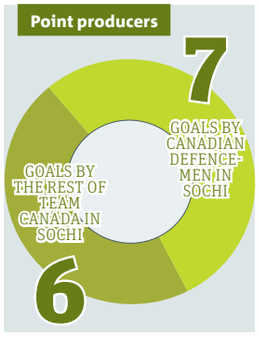
In Nolan's eyes, Canada was lucky to take the lead at 13:06 of the third after a slashing penalty was called on Georgijs Pujacs. But Babcock saw it more as the following-through on a game plan.

"We just thought we were going to win," he said. "We just talked about being patient and staying the course, not getting in a hurry, not forcing anything. If we did that we thought we'd be fine, and in the end we were."

That was one lesson Canada gleaned from this scare and almost joining the 2002 Swedish team that lost to Belarus in Salt Lake City in an infamous chapter of the Olympic history books: Winning matters more at this stage than how it happens.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Point producers



Americans up next

"They're obviously the favourite coming into the tournament, and we've opened up a lot of eyes with our play, but we have more in the tank to give and to show."

Max Pacioretty on the looming rematch of the 2010 gold-medal game with Canada. Pacioretty's Americans notched a 5-2 win over the Czech Republic on Wednesday. Canada and the U.S. meet in the semifinal on Friday.

Cross-border semi No. 2

"I think the Russian team will win."

Sweden coach Par Marts making a prediction after his team's 5-0 win over Slovenia, but before the Russia-Finland quarter-final. Finland coach Erkka Westerlund said "no comment" when asked for his reaction to what Marts said, and Finn forward Olli Jokinen added: "I don't really care." The Scandinavian rivals meet in the semifinals Friday.

Game of his life

"We were disappointed, because we tried to make a miracle today and we just couldn't do it."

Latvia's Kristers Gudlevskis, who stopped 55 shots and gave hockey fans across Canada cause for major concern on Wednesday afternoon.

Questionable call

C'mon ref!

It looked like Canada took the lead 8:27 into the third, but a controversial call kept it 1-1. Jonathan Toews and Patrick Marleau got the puck to the goal-line and almost over, but Latvia defenceman Kristaps Sotnieks gloved it to keep it out.

The ruling was that the puck did not fully cross the line, and Canada did not get a penalty shot because that cannot be awarded on review.

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'You never know'

Russian hopes Finn-ished

After Russia's men's hockey loss in the quarter-finals to Finland, most of Russia's players rushed through a mixed zone with TV cameras and reporters without stopping, waving off requests to verbalize their disappointment in losing their medal chances in the Sochi Games.

The players who did stop were brief. And Finland, not surprisingly, had a little more to say, with many sentiments summed up by forward Teemu Selanne:

"The experts are wrong many times — and I love it."

Still, as happy as the Finns were, they did show some sympathy for a Russian team that was carrying such high expectations.

Selanne: "I'm a little bit sad also for them. Obviously, they had a big dream to win the gold medal here and then it doesn't work so it's kind of disappointing in many ways because that would be a great story. But again, it's proving to the hockey world that you never know."

Russia's Alex Ovechkin only had this to say: "No emotion right now."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russian hockey fans at the end of Russia's loss to Finland on Wednesday in Sochi. JULIO CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Canucks' Raphael Diaz gets checked by the Maple Leafs' Nikolai Kulemin in Toronto on Feb. 8. The Canucks lost the game to enter the Olympic break on a seven-game losing streak. ABELIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Refreshed Canucks back on the grind

NHL. Players not competing in Sochi return to the ice at Rogers Arena as NHL break comes to an end

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Well, the break is over.

A number of Vancouver Canucks players not competing in Sochi took to the ice at Rogers Arena on Wednesday for their first skate since Feb. 8, when they lost to the Toronto Maple Leafs to close out their schedule heading into the Olympic break.

The group consisted of Jordan Schroeder, Zac Dalpe, Jannik Hansen, David Booth, Zack Kassian, Tom Sestito, Ryan Stanton, Chris Higgins, Jason Garrison, Brad Richardson and goalie Eddie Lack. Also taking part in the skate were five UBC Thunderbirds men's hockey team players, including one graduate.

Marred by injuries, the Canucks entered the break on a seven-game losing streak.

"It could've come a couple games earlier," said Sestito.

"I think that's exactly what we needed. Obviously we have a lot of injuries, so hopefully everyone's getting back healthy and the mental part of it, it's great not to see everybody for a week or so."

Minus the Olympians still in Russia, the Canucks were also without Alex Burrows (hand), Kevin Bieksa (foot), Chris Tanev (thumb) and captain Henrik Sedin (ribs) at Wednesday's practice, which was about an hour long and finished off with some conditioning skating drills.

Head coach John Tortorella said those four players are expected to skate on their own at UBC Thursday.

Defencemen Yannick Weber and Raphael Diaz, who competed for Switzerland at the Olympics, are expected to arrive back in Vancouver on Friday and skate the following day.

The Canucks resume their schedule on Wednesday against the St. Louis Blues. Vancouver's NHL club currently sits 10th in the Western Conference standings, one point out of a playoff spot.

Give him a break

John Tortorella managed a small break, but he still spent a good portion of his time watching film and dissecting his team's play, as well as doing some personal reflection.

- "With the amount of time we do have off, you do get away from it," said Tortorella. "As a coach, when you're sitting on a seven-game losing streak, I don't think there's much time to get too far away from it."

John Tortorella GETTY IMAGES

CFL

Lions shift focus of overhaul from coaches to players

Now that Mike Benevides has revamped his B.C. Lions coaching staff, more changes loom among the player ranks.

Benevides, the Lions' head coach, completed an off-season of unprecedented coaching changes under his watch as the CFL club announced the appointment of linebackers coach Johnny Holland on Wednesday. Holland was an assistant with the Grey Cup-champion Saskatchewan Roughriders last season.

In addition to Holland, Benevides has hired new offensive co-ordinator Khari Jones, brought in well-travelled former CFL head coach Joe Paopao as receivers coach and promoted Mark Washington to defensive co-ordinator from his former defensive secondary coaching role.

With the coaching staff completed, the attention can turn to replacing key players — slotback Nick Moore, nickelback Korey Banks and depth offensive lineman Steve Myddleton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLS. First-round draft pick Lewis balances fun and professionalism

Andre Lewis could only smile and look to the cement ceiling of UBC's Thunderbird Stadium.

The Vancouver Whitecaps' seventh overall pick in this year's MLS SuperDraft botched a backflip after scoring the lone goal in Sunday's friendly against the University of Victoria Vikes. It wouldn't have been a big deal, except it was caught on video, picked up by the soccer website 101 Great Goals, and then posted on Twitter for all to see.

He can laugh about it now.

"I do it back home in Jamaica, but unfortunately didn't happen," he said Tuesday.

"My mom, she see it and I talked to her yesterday, she was like, 'Hey Andre, don't do it again. I know you can do it, but don't do it again.'"

He did do it again. Lewis scored late in Wednesday's intrasquad game at UBC. Numerous reports state the fans in attendance began chanting for him to do a backflip, and he did. Successfully.

Lewis is only 19 years old. He admits to having a fun personality.

It's a balancing act for the midfielder. Not giving up what makes him tick as a person, but also evolving to where who he is off the field isn't a detriment to what he or the team is trying to achieve on it.

"Being a professional guy ... I have to keep myself to a personal standard and a balance, knowing that you are a professional soccer player," he said. CAM TUCKER/METRO

Quoted

"I have to keep myself to a personal standard and a balance, knowing that you are a professional soccer player."

Whitecaps midfielder Andre Lewis

MEDALS

Nation	G	S	B	Tot.
United States of America	7	5	11	23
Russian Federation	6	9	7	22
Netherlands	6	7	9	22
Norway	9	4	7	20
Canada	**5**	**9**	**4**	**18**
Germany	8	3	4	15

WHAT CANADA DID

WEDNESDAY

ALPINE SKIING

Men's Giant Slalom - Trevor Philp of Calgary was the top Canadian after the two runs, placing 25th (two minutes 49.55 seconds, +4.26 seconds). Phil Brown of Toronto was 29th (2:49.91) and Morgan Pridy of Whistler, B.C., was 33rd (2:51.96).

BIATHLON

2x6km Women + 2x7.5 km Men Mixed Relay - The Canadian team of Megan Imrie (Falcon Lake, Man.), Rosanna Crawford (Canmore, Alta.), Brendan Green (Hay River, N.W.T.) and Scott Perras (Regina), finished 12th with a time of one hour, 13 minutes and 27.7 seconds, four minutes and 10.7 seconds behind gold medallist Norway.

BOBSLEIGH

Women's - Kaillie Humphries (Calgary) and Heather Moyse (Summerside. P.E.I.), successfully defended their **gold medal** with a four-run time of three minutes 50.61 seconds, erasing a 0.23 deficit going into the final two runs to beat United States 1 by a tenth-of-a-second. Jennifer Ciochetti (Edmonton) and Chelsea Valois (Zenon Park, Sask.) placed 13th (3:54.49).

CROSS-COUNTRY

Ladies' Team Sprint ClassicSemifinal - Daria Gaiazova (Banff, Alta.) and Perianne Jones (Almonte, Ont.) were fifth out of the nine teams in their group and did not advance.

Men's Team Sprint Classic Semifinals - Alex Harvey (St. Ferreol-les-Neiges, Que.) and Devon Kershaw (Sudbury, Ont.) were sixth out of 11 teams in their group and did not advance.

CURLING

Women's Semifinal - Canada defeated Great Britain 6-4 and plays Sweden in the gold medal match on Thursday.

Men's Semifinal - Canada defeated China 10-6 and will face Great Britain for the gold medal on Friday.

FIGURE SKATING

Ladies Short Program - Kaetlyn Osmond (Sherwood Park, Alta.) placed 13th with 56.18 points and Gabrielle Daleman (Newmarket, Ont.) was 19th with 52.61 going into Thursday's free program.

ICE HOCKEY

Men's Quarter-final - Canada defeated Latvia 2-1 and will play the U.S. in the semifinal game on Friday.

SNOWBOARD

Ladies' Parallel Giant Slalom - Marianne Leeson (Burlington, Ont.) placed 5th overall, Caroline Calve (Aylmer, Que.) took 6th and Ariane Lavigne (Lac-Superieur, Que.) was 8th. Each lost their quarter-final race.

Men's Parallel Giant Slalom - Defending gold medallist Jasey Jay Anderson, of Mont-Tremblant, Que., and Matt Morison of Burketon, Ont., made it through qualifying but were eliminated in the next round. Michael Lambert of Toronto failed to made it through qualifying. Anderson placed 14th overall, Morison 15th and Lambert 27th.

SPEED SKATING

Ladies' 5000 m - Ivanie Blondon of Ottawa placed 14th overall with a time of seven minutes 20.10 seconds, 28.56 seconds behind gold medallist Martina Sablikova of the Czech Republic.

CURLING

At Sochi, Russia
All Times Eastern
MEN
Wednesday's results
SEMIFINALS
Canada 10 China 6
Britain 6 Sweden 5
Tuesday's results
TIEBREAKER
Britain 6 Norway 5
Friday's games
BRONZE MEDAL
Sweden vs. China, 3:30 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL
Britain vs. **Canada**, 8:30 a.m.
WOMEN
Wednesday's results
SEMIFINALS
Canada 6 Britain 4
Sweden 7 Switzerland 5
Thursday's games
BRONZE MEDAL
Britain vs. Switzerland, 3:30 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL
Canada vs. Sweden, 8:30 a.m.

HOCKEY

All times Eastern
MEN
Wednesday's results
QUARTERFINALS
Canada 2 Latvia 1
Sweden 5 Slovenia 0
Finland 3 Russia 1
United States 5 Czech Republic 2
Friday's games
SEMIFINALS
Sweden at Finland, 7 a.m.
Canada at United States, 12 p.m.
Saturday's game
BRONZE MEDAL GAME
Semifinal losers, 10 a.m.
Sunday's game
GOLD MEDAL GAME
Semifinal winners, 7 a.m.

CANADA 2, LATVIA 1

First Period
1. Canada, Sharp 1 (Nash) 13:37.
2. Latvia, Darzins 1 (Kulda, Sprukts) 15:41.
Penalties — Sharp Cda (tripping) 6:18, Keith Cda (broken stick) 16:02.
Second Period — No Scoring.
Penalties — Girgensons Lat (slashing) 5:37, St. Louis Cda (slashing) 10:21, Ozolinsh Lat (high-sticking) 19:33.
Third Period
3. Canada, Weber 1 (Doughty, Toews) 13:06 (pp).
Penalties — Pujacs Lat (slashing) 11:09.
Shots

Latvia	6	5	5—16
Canada	16	19	22—57

Goal — Latvia: Gudlevskis (L); Canada: Price (W). **Power plays (goal-chances) —** Latvia: 0-3; Canada: 1-3.
Referees — Tim Peel, Jyri Ronn. **Linesmen** — Brad Kovachik, Sakari Suominen.
Attendance — 9,825 at Sochi, Russia.
WOMEN
Thursday's games
BRONZE MEDAL GAME
Switzerland at Sweden, 7 a.m.
GOLD MEDAL GAME
Canada at United States, 12 p.m.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There are a lot of things you need to consider, things that may be of benefit to you in the not too distant future, so don't waste your time socializing when you should be thinking.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Aim to make new friends over the next 24 hours, especially with people whose interests are in some way out of the ordinary. It's not true that Taurus is old-fashioned. In fact, you can be a bit of a rebel.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You will come under pressure today, especially at work where someone in a position of authority will do their best to make life miserable for you. Stay cool and don't let them provoke you.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
It is time to move on, with no regrets, no backward glances and no promises that if things don't work out you can always go back. Draw a line in the sand, step across it and embrace the new you.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It will pay you to be ruthless today, especially when dealing with people who always seem to get more out of your relationship than you. Look tough, talk tough and, when the time comes, act tough too.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
It may seem as if you're dancing to everyone's tune. Why is that bad? Sometimes it's nice to sit back and let others worry about where to go and what to do next.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Stop worrying about all the little things that may or may not be going wrong and concentrate on the one big thing you would most like to go right. Focus your mind power in a single direction.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Put your own interests first. The Sun in Pisces is giving you a boost of confidence, so make the most of it and make sure everyone knows where you are coming from and what you intend to do.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
As the Sun is moving through the domestic area of your chart it will pay you to focus more on family members than on yourself or your work.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Let people know what is on your mind today. If you keep your thoughts to yourself you will not only feel isolated but you will miss out on a chance to influence the great debate.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Limit spending to essentials today. You know how easy it is to reach into your pocket and find cash for this or that but if you do that now you may have nothing left for the weekend.

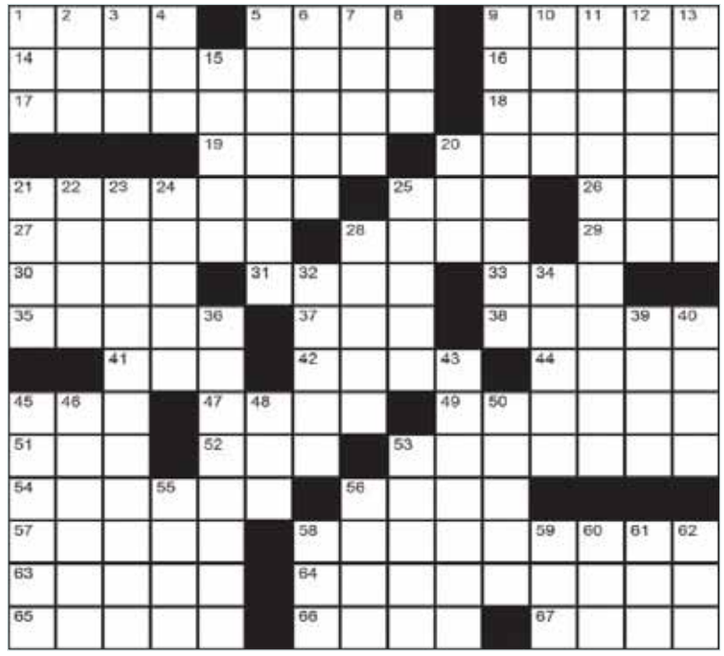
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Make the most of the Sun in your sign to do something out of the ordinary, something that makes the world sit up and take notice. Don't worry that what you do may be seen as "controversial" — the more people you offend the better.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

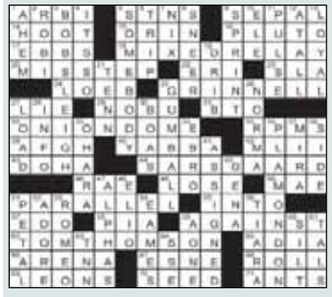
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. SOCHI 2014 - Ice Hockey venue, Bolshoy Ice __
5. Military cap
9. Derek & The Dominos song
14. Inuit language
16. Dainty cases
17. Contemporary creation: 2 wds.
18. SOCHI 2014 - Russki __ Ski Jumping Center
19. SOCHI 2014 - 'I' of IOC [abbr.]
20. "You Needed Me" bit: "_ __ a tear..."
21. Fifty Shades of Grey novelist, _._. __
25. Ford product
26. See, in Dutch
27. Author, __ May Alcott
28. __ fide
29. Elevs.
30. 17th-century sailor, Captain __
31. Unique
33. Caesar's 1051
35. Choler
37. Fire: French
38. Canadian guitarist renowned for Mediterranean music
41. Time
42. Fruit-filled pastry
44. Singer Mr. Cruz
45. Seed holder
47. Search
49. Actor Mr. Hauer
51. Pre-afternoon hrs.
52. __ excellence
53. Go to a restaurant: 2 wds.
54. Relishes: 2 wds.
56. Examination
57. "That was _ __!" (I had fun!)
58. Body of water for Saint Petersburg, Russia: 2 wds.
63. "Do you get the birthday __ _ sent?"
64. 'We Were Born to Glory' Canadian singer/songwriter: 2 wds.
65. Shakira album: 'Donde __ los Ladrones?'
66. Formal gr.
67. Leave out

Down
1. Faint
2. Yoko's surname
3. Soaked soil
4. Barely get by
5. Actor Greg
6. Les __-Unis (United States, in French)
7. Knitting stitch
8. Addams Family relative
9. Painful 'pin' problem: 2 wds.
10. 'Origin' suffix
11. Doctor played by Omar Sharif: 2 wds.
12. Appreciate something: 2 wds.
13. Digressions
15. Pares
20. Sir McKellen link
21. "Hot in Cleveland" role
22. Meat cut
23. SOCHI 2014 - Figure Skating, for example: 2 wds.
24. Helpful human
25. Heart: French
28. Crack
32. Following
34. Coffee order
36. Boney M. disco hit
39. Stead
40. __ cloud, as per Astronomy
43. Soap opera star Mr. Rogers
45. Royal residence
46. "Mutual of __ Wild Kingdom"
48. The Raven writer's monogram
50. Up to
53. Quebec's flag symbol, Fleur-__-__ [var. sp.]
55. Pop
56. Artsy spot in New Mexico
58. Undergarment
59. Mountain basin
60. "...or __ _ thought."
61. Dawn goddess
62. Promos

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

2					3	9	7	
	5			1		3	2	
4			5					6
				5			1	8
		3				5		
5	7			2				
1					8			2
	8	5		6			4	
	9	2	7					1

Yesterday's Sudoku

3	6	4	9	7	2	5	8	1
5	9	1	6	8	3	7	4	2
8	7	2	5	4	1	9	3	6
9	2	8	3	6	5	4	1	7
7	1	5	4	2	9	3	6	8
4	3	6	8	1	7	2	9	5
1	5	3	2	9	6	8	7	4
6	4	9	7	5	8	1	2	3
2	8	7	1	3	4	6	5	9

Today
7°/2°
Showers
60%

Friday
6°/2°
Variable

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